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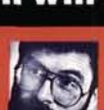

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Will Hutton on the road to ruin

Car Crazy

Cartoon: Nick Newman

Cars. What a lot there are, and how many more there will soon be. The invention that – along with the telephone and the washing machine – was one of the great gifts of the 20th century to the common person, is instead becoming its most lethal bequest.

Gridlock, the phenomenon in which nose-to-tail traffic jams snarl up into street upon street of unmoving vehicles, is already a feature of New York and Los Angeles. London is in imminent risk of following suit.

The figures are dramatic. Car ownership in Britain is not high by international standards – but neither is the available road space. Department of Transport projections show road usage nearly doubling over the next decade, and road space increasing by a tiny fraction. If Britain's conurbations and cities are not to be overwhelmed by cars, then something has to happen – but what?

The trick is to limit the growth in the use of cars while recognising that with growing affluence people want to move about more – indeed they have built their lives on that assumption. If cars are not to be rationed by central directives then they must be rationed by price; in other words, owning and using a car must become more expensive.

At the very least petrol has to become dearer, so that every journey costs more; and a system of licensing cars when they go into densely-populated areas has to be developed. This is road pricing, a means of charging road users for their privileged use of the road network.

At the moment car users can go where they like whenever they like, whatever the resulting traffic jams. If, instead, an electronic device could read when cars drove into congested areas and subsequently billed the owner, then at least there would be a deterrent to adding to the congestion.

But the need to travel will remain – which requires a huge investment in transport infrastructure if people diverted from the road are going to move in relative ease around the country. This requires attention to the rail network, transport in our cities, and the imposition of a rational and co-ordinated timetable structure upon all the varying constituents.

But above all, it requires some thought. Sensible co-ordination is predicated upon some notion that there is an end in sight for which co-ordinators are aiming – some combination of transport services that will meet the demands likely to be made upon the system as a whole.

In short, there has to be some strategy, and a strategic authority to match. Market incentives to use cars less have to be matched by government initiatives to provide a compensatory transport system – otherwise people will elect to continue using the roads, gridlock notwithstanding.

Nor is this simply a matter of transport. There is the environmental question. Manufacturers are making cars with engines that give ever better energy performance. This may do more to conserve oil and the atmosphere, but they are still going to overpopulate our roads – and still emit exhaust fumes.

All of which points to a world in which motorists' liberties are circumscribed and public bodies start to plan strategically. There is no other option – and one more reason why the doctrine of the nightwatchman state and the boundless free market is reaching the limits of its possibilities. The pendulum is swinging back, here, too; but hard-learned lessons about the impact of price incentives and the need for instruments of government to be cleverer and more accountable will not be forgotten either. ●

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Picking through the debris of political systems

Marvellous Disorder

David Marquand

After socialism – liberalism. In a nutshell, that seems to have become the conventional wisdom of the English-speaking world. It is what Francis Fukuyama meant when he said that the collapse of communism portended the end of history. It was implicit in Ralf Dahrendorf's insistence, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, that there could be no 'third way' between communism and the open society. It lies behind the desperate attempts of Labour politicians like Roy Hattersley and Brian Gould to redefine socialism as freedom. It provided the impetus for Labour's policy review, and underpins the fashionable proposal that the welfare state of Beveridge and Attlee should be replaced with an enabling state, guaranteeing social-citizenship rights. It created the context for the ideological coalition that took shape around Charter 88. It is the foundation for Paddy Ashdown's boast that the Liberal Democrats are the party of the future and Labour of the past.

As all this implies, it contains an important germ of truth. Classical, top-down state socialism – whether in its Fabian or in its marxist incarnation – has long been bankrupt. The 1989 revolutions in central Europe and the agonised unravelling of the Soviet state are only the last chapters in a story that began with Khrushchev's fall, Dubcek's suppression and the failure of Harold Wilson's compromise between Bevanite fundamentalism and Gaitskellite revisionism. By 1970 at latest it was clear that the socialism of the eastern bloc was and would remain, economically irrational, politically oppressive and morally corrupt, and that the democratic socialism officially professed by the British Labour Party and the French Socialist Party, would not survive a moments encounter with the realities of a global market and a plural society. Since then, nominally socialist parties have flourished only to the extent that they have abandoned socialism.

By the same token, there is no doubt that classical state socialism went bankrupt partly because state socialists either repudiated liberalism, as in the East, or took it for granted, as in the West. The origins of Stalin's Gulag lay, in part, in Marx's contempt for bourgeois parliamentarianism and bourgeois citizenship. The grossest failures of the Wilson-Callaghan governments can be traced back to the blithe assumption that Britain's corrupt and illiberal *ancien regime* was liberal enough to be a suitable vehicle for social democracy. The moral of the 20th century is that we forget at our peril the historic liberal precepts that power corrupts, that majorities can tyrannise, that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance and that without constitutional checks and balances that vigilance will not be effective. The moral of classical socialism's bankruptcy is that they should speak at least as loudly to the self-proclaimed Left, as to the Centre and the Right.

Yet there is danger in the conventional wisdom. There are deeper reasons for the bankruptcy of classical, state socialism, as well as the ones I have mentioned. Three stand out – economic reductionism, teleological historicism and positivist social-scientism. Whether Fabian or marxist, classical socialists saw the economy as primary and the polity as secondary. Political aspirations reflected economic interests; political arrangements corresponded to economic conditions. Again whether Fabian or marxist, they assumed that history moved along a determinate path towards a knowable goal, and that because they knew what the goal was, they had both the right and the duty to give history a shove. Most disastrously of all, Fabians and marxists alike assumed that socialism expressed a social science, similar in logical status to natural science; that this social science could tell them how to build a better world as surely as the natural sciences tell an engineer how to build a better bridge; and that they could therefore treat recalcitrant civil society, with all its unmappable interdependencies and messy unpredictability, as an engineer treats a slab of concrete.

The moral failures of classical socialism can nearly all be traced back to these assumptions. But none of them is unique to socialism. They can also be found, not perhaps in all forms of liberalism, but certainly in some of its most influential forms. Economic reductionism was at least as prevalent among the pioneers of 19th century liberalism as among their socialist adversaries. It was, of course, a different kind of reductionism, with a different moral. It pointed towards a market order, based on private property, instead of away from it. But it too saw politics as a struggle between economic interests, and it too held that the political system must fit the economic.

Also like classical socialism, classical liberalism was imbued with a teleological historicism that told its adherents that History, with a capital 'H', was on their side, and they on History's: the most obvious difference between Macaulay's historicism and Marx's is that the former was cruder and more blatant. And classical liberals were as convinced as classical socialists that they had mastered a science of society, from which social engineers could draw conclusions as firm as the ones which real engineers drew from the natural sciences. The truth is that classical liberal individualism and classical socialist collectivism were brothers beneath the skin. Both were children of the enlightenment and both were suffused with its hubristic rationalism. Both reduced the awesome complexity of real societies, with real histories and real traditions, to simplified models produced by *a priori* ratiocination; and when reality and model collided, both were disastrously apt to put the model first. So liberals found themselves justifying child labour, and socialists the systematic murder of Ukrainian peasants.

A post-socialist world has much to learn from the liberal tradition, but it also has much to learn from the socialist tradition. The lesson it most needs to learn, however, is Goethe's: theory is grey, but life is green. No system can ever do justice to the marvellous disorder of humanity. Liberals like Tom Paine have known that instinctively. So have socialists like William Morris. The tragedy is that their turbulent humanism has usually been buried beneath the rubble of the system builders. If we are to pick our way through the current crisis of the systems, it will be a better guide than rationalistic arrogance, whether of Bentham and Keynes or of Marx and Lenin.●

Illustration: Simon Stern

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Beatrix Campbell on the future for Irish republicanism

Talk About Talks

Gerry Adams, MP for West Belfast, is president of Sinn Fein

What institutions does the community of west Belfast create for itself that enable it to survive? And what is the connection between the culture created in that community and the politics that you create?
Sometimes you get myths developing about the place. I'm quite sure that there are all sorts of people who are apolitical and who just want to get on with their lives. We had the worst housing in western Europe. And we've had a series of demolition campaigns. We believe that we were influential in all of that. It wasn't a Sinn Fein campaign though, it was a west Belfast campaign which Sinn Fein was involved in.

What do you feel about the 'culture of grief' here? As you walk into this building there is a tribute to 'our fallen comrades', walls are covered in icons of martyrdom. An insistence on the right to remember. Another side of that risks being mawkish and sentimental, and excusing everything because you have got the ultimate excuse.
Some republicans feel 'we're going to have a united Ireland because of all the people who have died... '. There is an over-emphasis on that. But I don't know anyone who's actually involved in the struggle because of death, and it certainly isn't being fought to the death.

But symbols define the language that you speak.
The reason why there are so many icons is because there's been such a concentration of killing.

In 20 years time we may be saying: 'The amazing thing about Gerry Adams, and republicanism in Ireland, is that it's survived'. But that doesn't describe the limits of the struggle.
Actually we recognise that a lot among ourselves. What west Belfast epitomises is that culture of resistance. We need to change that culture of resistance into a culture of change.

Republicanism once appeared to the British and Irish establishment as dangerous, mobile, something to be controlled. Now it seems like a movement that can be contained. What can you do about that?
Talks involving all the main political parties except Sinn Fein are difficult for us. For those who do believe that armed struggle is part of the political landscape here, the difficulty becomes more that the only way you can penetrate that containment, is through successful armed actions. Yet the only way to defeat it in the long term, is politically.

The IRA itself is unable to defeat the British. But they have stopped us from increasing our support in all of Ireland. When you get as far as Germany, or France, or the USA, or Spain, or wherever, what they see is not an ongoing political struggle but the worst tragedies of the armed actions. It's wrong that a struggle for freedom actually ends up killing non-involved people, or people it would aspire to free. That contradiction between unarmed and armed political struggle is one of the major difficulties of Ireland's situation.

How far are you imprisoned by the relative autonomy of the armed movement from the political movement? You have spoken about the terrible cost of careless killing, but does the relative autonomy in relations between the IRA and Sinn Fein staunch the impact of your criticism?
It's impossible to know. In many ways the IRA has more support than Sinn Fein. For example, in the 26 counties Sinn Fein has very little electoral support, because it is vying with others for votes. The IRA isn't. But electoralism isn't the only parameter of measuring republican support. We find that where we are politically organised we can absorb those tragedies better.

The negotiations go on, whether you're involved or not. What initiative can you imagine now that will prevent your becoming marginalised?
We have to be philosophical and patient. The British have launched a political initiative every two and a half years, and we have always said that they go for options. And as they fail to develop an option, then they move very slowly towards the option of British withdrawal, and then towards partition. This is all part of the process of marginalising, containing, isolating, and beating republicanism. But it cannot succeed in bringing about democracy.

But where can you see your new initiative?
What I'm trying to say is that we may not be able to take an initiative.

You have had significant international connections with the US, but Sinn Fein isn't part of what are new conversations in Europe. Do you feel isolated from them?
We feel isolated from them because Sinn Fein doesn't have full-time people and offices in Brussels or Paris, because we can't afford them. When I do a run around those countries, I generally meet people from right across the political spectrum, and they understand that the British shouldn't be here.

Can you afford not to be there?
We have identified that as important. We have been saying that Peter Brooke is in a no-lose situation because internationally he is selling this process as a peace initiative. What we have been doing internationally has been to develop the resources, to inform people about what is happening here.

I'm wondering about the other side of that conversation. You also need to be renewed, to be reinvigorated. The language of European socialism has changed. But the conditions for your participation in the conversation aren't there. That's a different ballgame from the connections that you have in the US which may be supporting you – but not transforming you.
Of course. And obviously because of isolationism there have been few opportunities – in fact off the top of my head I can't think of any. The difference between any other European socialism and socialism in Ireland is that few of them have to deal with the problems of an occupation. But Ireland has great potential as a European issue.

You say you can't afford to resource your presence in Europe, but there is a bombing campaign in Europe against the British army. I can't imagine how that can connect with European socialists, who at another level would be utterly committed to your struggle. So the military campaign can be afforded but the political campaign can't?
I accept completely the validity of that view, but it presupposes that one can shift resources from a military campaign into an unarmed political process.

You've been associated precisely with prioritising the political.
But we are a very small party – look at the state of these offices! Our inability to latch into that European dimension is a source of frustration for me.

Sean MacBride, the late Irish politician and human rights campaigner, framed a set of employment standards for Northern Ireland, which Irish American investors could insist upon. What difference did that campaign make?
It put the whole issue of discrimination in employment on the political agenda. It rekindled the sense of outrage here. And it showed clearly how an issue here could become an American issue. MacBride's issues are starting to move through Europe. There is also a small potential in Britain with the firms that are guilty of discrimination there.

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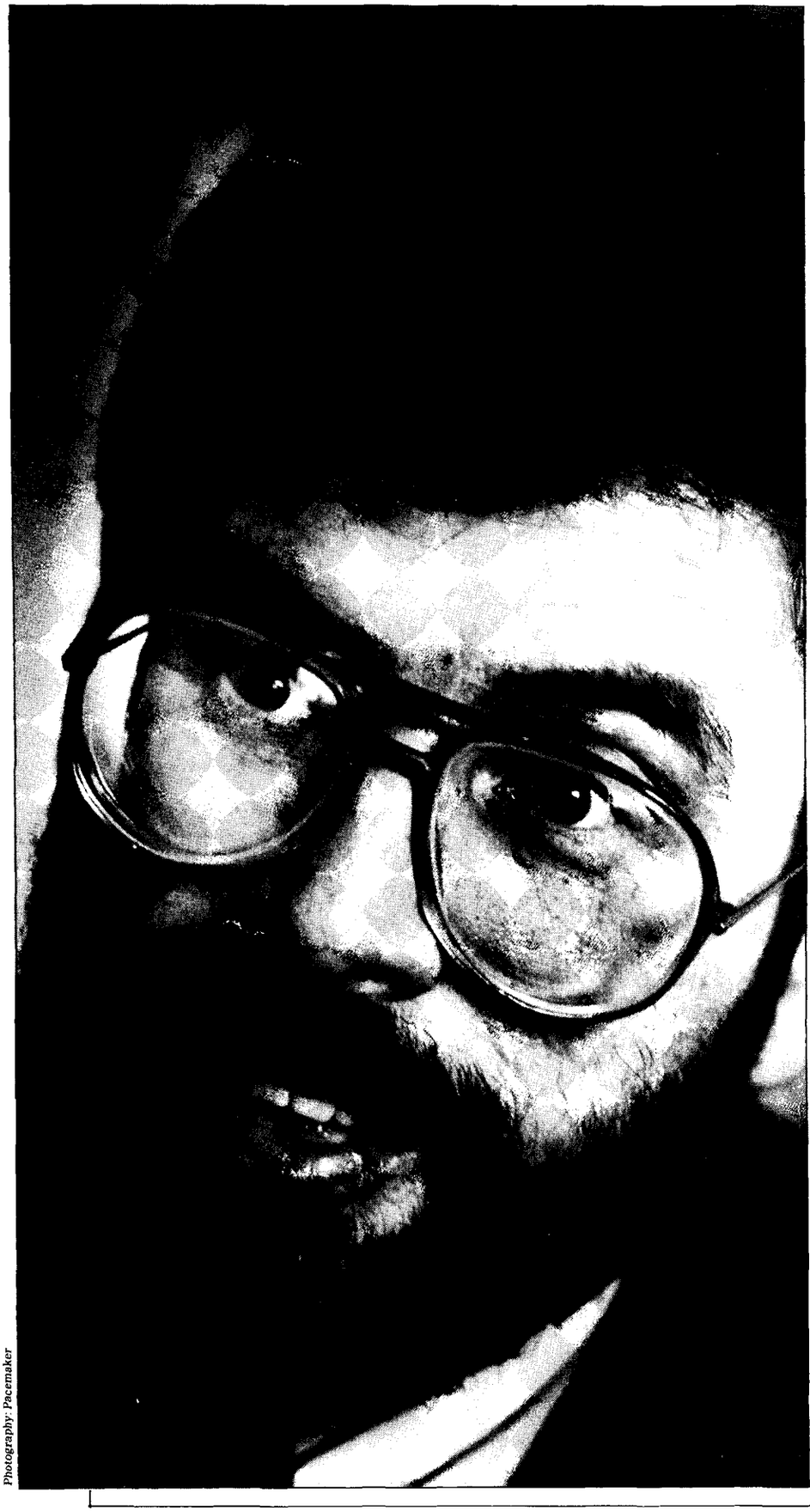
EYE TO EYE



Photography: Pacemaker

People have been entranced by Mary Robinson's election as President of the Republic. Partly because she's a woman. But the language of her inauguration also introduced a sense of Irishness that was open, not closed. A celebration of Irishness. Now you would have complaints about her non-engagement with you and with your difficulties, but in her election the Republic surprised itself and said something new about itself.

I welcomed her election. I was disappointed though that at her inauguration there were no victims of Bloody Sunday, there were no mothers or daughters or sisters of the 700 political prisoners, or even the 200 loyalist prisoners. That was a miscalculation by Mary Robinson. If she is, as she aspires to be, the president of all the people of Ireland, then she has to be the president of republican Ireland, which in many ways is the hidden Ireland.

I have always felt that we have two Irelands, and one has to pay lip-service to the other. The establishment Ireland has to pay lip-service to 1916. And the hidden Ireland, the radical republican Ireland even has to pay lip-service to the church. Paradoxically Mary Robinson's election proves that every so often the hidden Ireland can come forward. I think it augurs well for Ireland in the long term.

Despite the referenda results on divorce and abortion, a feminist has been elected. That's saying something extraordinary. Do you have the confidence to challenge them to the degree that she does?

We don't need to.

Women might need you to.

I'm very open on all of that. Divorce should be a civil right. We have long had a position on the need for availability of contraceptives. We have a progressive position on abortion, against the criminalisation of women. But we, as a political movement, need to move ahead on the basis that you won't have women's liberation without national liberation.

Our position on abortion was totally and maliciously misrepresented by our opponents, and lost us many, many votes in mid-Ulster. My position has to be the position of anyone in this job. If we have these symbolic attitudes on these issues we lose votes all over the place. Alternatively, we go forward as progressively as people will allow us, and retain their political allegiance. As a party which is censored, which is marginalised, which is under-resourced, which doesn't get to explain its position on most issues, then it's a matter of keeping to the safe ground.●

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Sarah Benton

The hundred year war of the Catholic Church against communism is over. Catholicism seems to have won. In an encyclical to mark the centenary of Leo XIII's denunciation of godless marxism, John Paul II chooses to offer us a measured critique of unfettered capitalism. He seems to have pleased everyone. Unfettered capitalists like to know that there's someone out there, picking up the pieces; it allows them to carry on breaking things up.

As for communism, John Paul II can afford to forget it. Communism, as a hundred years of popes have known and denounced it, is no more. According to this one, it was killed single-handedly by popular uprisings in eastern Europe spearheaded by the Poles. They did it, he writes ' by means of peaceful protest, using only the weapons of truth and justice'.

Now here he is seriously wrong. During the 1980s, oppressed and suffering people in all countries discovered a new weapon. It was international support. Its arrival signalled the end of the cold war and it is likely to be a large and permanent part of the new world order. Sometimes it takes the form of aid, sometimes of investment, sometimes even intervention. It's so new that the rules are being worked out every day.

The new help is a response to demand, and the demand trusts in the supply. Where Hungarians cried out in vain for international support in 1956, their sons and daughters knew that in their time their voices would be heard. The Berlin wall fell, not when East Germans spoke out for truth and justice, but when they upped and left. And they were able to leave because they had somewhere to go. Even the Vietnamese boat people trusted that international guilt would find them a home. That option – of finding listening ears and a place to go to – is new. It revolutionises the treatment of internal oppression, just as publicity and the provision of refuges revolutionised the treatment of domestic violence.

Such help was not available in 1940 to the Jews. If they cried out for truth and justice, nobody heard (including the Catholic Church, which was more preoccupied with its war against communism). If anyone heard, nobody believed them; and even where they were believed, few thought that there was anything they could, or should do. Many survivors, including the psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim, attributed Jewish passivity to this realisation that nobody cared enough to rescue them.

It may be that our century will go down in history as the century of barbarous crimes. The technological and military order of the mid-20th century in particular gave us the distinctive motif of those crimes: 'I was just obeying orders'. Knowledge of the crimes, and the refusal of responsibility, have both blighted human hope and faith. But that knowledge has also fed the end-of-century notion: that 'we' have a duty to help people whose suffering is extreme, and for which we may bear some responsibility.

The change fits in with the new technology of the late 20th century; a technology not of mass machines, in which humans are the notorious semi-human cogs of mass production, but a technology which allows individual actors to portray human suffering in essentially human form. The big shift came, thinks Suzanne Macgregor, new chair of War on Want, with Band Aid. Band Aid grew out of freelance efforts which thrived quite outside the main institutions of the day. It grew out of films made by small tv crews, the initiative of music star Bob Geldof, out of his anger and confident sense that if people knew of the suffering, and they knew what to do, they would do something. He showed them what to do – with the help of all the electronic media, from individual amplified guitars through cheap music cassettes to satellite tv. Telethons, free phone lines and credit cards have transformed the act of giving.

Television, then, is a prime factor in the change. Once a tv crew has visited, filmed and the film been broadcast, nobody can say: 'We didn't know'. These films, of hobbling emaciated persons, of babies who have no hope after six months of life, of human beings turned into monstrous corpses by flood, fire or famine, are not pieces of political analysis, nor even economic denunciation of a greedy West. They sidestep all that. The only fingers of blame which they point are at us, the viewers, sitting at home in comfort, with enough money to own a tv set and a sofa to sit on for watching it. If we're eating while we watch the starving die, so much the better, perhaps we'll choke on it.

For several years, the charities have been worrying about 'compassion fatigue', as though using our compassion wears it out and uses it up. This seems to me to be an unlikely consequence. It is likely though that people will feel daunted as they realise how much misery there is – and how much more, at the flick of a button, they might know about. Already, the international, institutional sources of money employed simply to stop people dying horribly – the UN and the EC – have been used up. It is unlikely that the response round the world is 'oh well, no more money then until 1992'. It is more likely that there will be pressure for larger coffers, for better ways of channelling the means of survival to where it's needed.

The end of communism, moreover, has increased the pressure to give. Citizens of the West are newly aware that their wealth and power knows no boundaries. As the most powerful force in the world, they can reach inside the national boundaries of other states, where those states are too weak to maintain the boundaries – or the welfare of their citizens. If a state cannot fulfil its first task, to protect its people, then the task passes to a supranational body.

Thus, an unfettered global capitalism both reminds people in the West of the responsibility for poverty in foreign parts, and removes the barriers – national political bodies – against intervention. As giving – taking on the role of protecting people – is a form of intervention, we are all caught up in the new laws of supply and demand for help. This popular response seems a good thing. Surely if human beings finally accept some responsibility for the consequences of their actions (if only as consumers of the world's resources), then this must be progress in a barbarous century of 'just doing my job'? Yet the prospect of a Third World denuded of national political structures – and the national political intelligentsia that seeks to operate those structures to the benefit of its citizens – is also a deeply worrying trend.●

Illustration: Simon Stern

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Publics On Parade

John Edmonds is general secretary of the GMB

As your special issue, 'Power To The Public', discussed (*MT* May), what matters for the 90s is not the private versus the public sectors, but what type of public sector. In Japan, for example, there is a corporate organisational strategy known as 'zaibatsu'. It has achieved enormous success for those corporations who have adopted it; not least for those who destroyed the British motorcycle and car industries. It is now working with success for the Japanese in the City of London.

The strategy is simple. On identifying a problem or a task, the corporation sets out not to overcome it directly. Rather, like an oil-tanker uses a pilot boat, the huge corporation appoints a small team of handpicked individuals with expertise in the field. They are given the task, are operationally independent but held accountable financially.

Thus, the Nomura bank heralded its arrival in the City with a team of three people. They rented an office and some databases, and set out to chart the waters. Nomura is now in the top ten of City financial institutions.

The labour movement and the public services have our own examples of 'intrapreneurs'. Intrapreneneurs are most often professional people with specific experience and expertise. Their motivation is to help the overall enterprise in the best way they can, with the independence that brings satisfaction, but without the corrupting confusion of ends justifying the means that dogs the private sector and denies the consumer and the public the quality and informed choice to which they have a right.

The relationship between public administration and service deliverer cannot go back to the pre-tendering days. Indeed, Michael Heseltine's intention to privatise the white collar services of local government will throw this relationship into sharp relief as the managerial classes in councils come to terms with it.

The issue is not so much how the structures are set up, but how the client and contractor work together. A report commissioned by GMB from the Competition Advice Project looked at our experience of competitive tendering over the past three years. The report states: 'In many councils there has been a pattern of client and contractor officers locked into conflict, scoring points off each other, and seeking to achieve their own personal agendas at the expense of the authority's commitment to service delivery and the interest of its own employees'.

I believe that the achievement of the Left's agenda for the public services in the 90s depends in large part on getting this relationship right. I do not believe it can be done with the private sector partner in the dominant position. Nor can it be done, as the authors of the articles in 'Power To The Public' all agree, by a return to the oil tanker view of public administration.

Quality assurance and effective delivery means that the contractor half of the relationship should be akin to the pilot boat. Privately or publicly owned, it doesn't matter too much; but publicly-motivated and individually responsible – that does.●

Margaret Hodge is leader of Islington Council

It is only since John Major raised the notion of a citizen's charter that the media has chosen to focus on the radical changes taking place in local government (*MT* May). Yet the Conservatives' interest and purpose is totally different from ours. Labour Councils have been grappling with a new agenda for a decade. It was clear to us from the grant cuts and rate capping campaigns of the 80s that these attacks engendered little public outrage, as support for public services was so lukewarm. So for those who still believed that the public sector is important both as a mechanism of redistribution and as a vehicle for collective and community action, restoring faith in its worth became paramount.

Three principal values underpin our policies and actions – quality, equality and democracy. These values are inextricably linked. For instance, only quality services can promote equality of opportunity. Similarly, only by introducing participative democratic structures can you really improve quality. Reforming services to reflect these values is an enormous and complex challenge. It involves opening up our institutions to public account by, for instance, developing and publishing performance indicators, by rigorously measuring outputs as well as inputs, by promoting effective complaints mechanisms and by developing quality audits and consumer contracts.

Even publishing information has proved threatening to professionals who still think they know best. The first time we produced a committee report on the London reading test results for 11 year-olds in our schools, we met with outrage from many head teachers. Similarly, seeing complaints systems as a positive contribution to improving quality is difficult for officials who resent criticism. I doubt whether the government would be willing to promote such a course of action. Their record has been to abolish institutions which oppose them like the GLC, the ILEA and the metropolitan councils. Equally, they threatened to cut the Citizens' Advice Bureau funding when the CAB's advocacy on behalf of its clients became too threatening.

Even on the issue of contracts, the market solution is not always as appropriate as Graham Mather suggests. Commuters on the infamous Northern line don't want compensation if their train fails to arrive; they want to get to work on time. Residents don't want a fiver if their refuse is not collected; they want their bins emptied. So our practical approach has been to specify standards and sanctions which are specific and appropriate to the service. If these customer contracts are to be developed in more complex areas like education (which we intend), trying to pay teachers by results or give parents £200 for the failure of the school to teach their child will do nothing to improve quality or meet legitimate aspirations.

Finally, Charlie Leadbeater's manifesto, with its plethora of government sponsored regulatory bodies, fills me with foreboding. A centralist solution to the weaknesses of the public sector will not work, and the Labour Party must address this issue. Only by decentralising power and directly involving people in the delivery of services do you really produce services which reflect peoples' wants. And if they are involved in delivering those services, their ownership of them means they will be the first to defend them.●

Civil Proceedings

While it may well be true to argue, as Geoff Mulgan does (*MT*, May), that the institutions of the public sector will remain very important, it is not the case that once clear macro goals are set it will become easier to monitor their performance. In the civil service, at least, public access to information will need to be drastically rethought.

How we decide to define and label the consumers of public services – customers, consumers or clients – will be a matter of academic interest if they do not have access to the information about the ways in which the public institutions are run, and the ways in which decisions, including financial ones, are taken. The reforms to the 1911 Official Secrets Act – which made the revealing of any official secret a criminal offence – have helped in only a limited way. A freedom of information act is crucial if the public are to assess the value of the services they receive.

Geoff Mulgan touches upon the reforms within the civil service in the shape of 'next steps agencies'. This is a case in point. In the past two years, almost half the civil service has been 'reformed' to these agencies. Yet there is little information about their performance, and no real public debate about whether the services they deliver are reaching the public more quickly, more efficiently – or indeed, more equitably. Moreover, there is no mechanism for monitoring the performance of agencies.

One thing remains clear, however; that the Treasury's financial control over the new agencies will be absolute. While chief executives are being told to go into the marketplace in order to earn business and generate income for the agencies which they run, they do not have many of the marketplace tools. They have no control over their capital assets, and are unable to borrow using any of their assets as collateral.

Also, the Treasury remains reluctant to allow any significant changes in the way they reward their staff. There have been some major success stories in the 'unreformed pre-agency' civil service. Yet, crucially, there is no mechanism for rewarding the achievements of those civil servants who made them possible.●

Elizabeth Simons, general secretary of the Association of First Division Civil Servants

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Science Fictions

The silent partner in Gail Vines' article on bioethics (*MT* May) is that mythic beast, science, itself. Much, if not all, of the political discussion about the relations between science and society takes place in a vacuum; articles about science for a lay audience rarely contain any science at all.

The real cultural status of science is best illustrated by looking at the inconsistencies in the iconography of science. Conjure up if you will the ridiculous fetish society makes of the scientist; one part the white-coated man in the Vortex advert, with mushroom clouds for pupils, and one part the nifty Jap, with his (yes, his) penchant for cunning household gizmos. The scientist is simultaneously the master and the servant, the Janus-faced Jeeves to society's amiable Wooster. That is an iconography of fear and ignorance.

Despite the stranglehold of the 'arts' on the media, scientists are, in many ways, the privileged members of the intelligentsia. We alone have, and can, subsume science within our cultural lives. For the rest, to all intents and purposes, science has *hic sunt leones* written all over it. This is due partly to the nature of the educational system (Scotland honourably excepted), with its early specialisation, and partly to the overweening ethos of the warmed-over 'classical education' which supposedly fitted a man for empire building and passes for intellectual culture in this country.

Muriel Spark once wrote that novelists are blasphemers, because they create people with no ability to redeem themselves. The core of science, the source of its beauty and terror, lies in the power of the scientist, if good enough, to remake the world in an actual act of blasphemy which transcends that of the novelist completely.●
Mairn Scott, Kirkaldy

War Zoning

As readers of *Marxism Today* for years, we welcome the diversity of the opinions in your coverage of the Gulf War. But we are disgusted by the rhetoric (used by some of your writers) designed to make Saddam Hussein the Satan who created this war. A Hitler he may be, but Iraq is no Germany. Hitler's Germany was the leading European industrial state, capable of producing and using the most sophisticated weapons of the period, while Iraq had to buy its arms from us.

As leftist Americans we found Fred Halliday's article (*MT* April) callous and shortsighted: 'we know what the populations of (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Iran) thought,' he commented, 'they backed, in the main, war against Saddam'. How do we know? Here in the US we were carefully programmed to think we knew by such expert public relations firms as Hill and Knowlton, who orchestrated a massive extravaganza designed to tell us what to think about Kuwait. For $11,000,000 Craig Fuller, president of Hill and Knowlton, and formerly chief of staff to the then vice president George Bush, created a fictional 'Citizens for a Free Kuwait', which told us in full-page ads and planted news stories what the Emir and Bush wanted us to think Kuwaitis believed. And we have no information on what the populations of Saudi Arabia and Iran thought about the war.

In any event, the war didn't bring about Halliday's desired aims. The Kuwaiti opposition has been given short shrift by the Emir. The Kurds, urged into revolt by the Bush administration, are dying in squalid refugee camps. The Shi'ite Iraqi opposition is rotting away in southern Iraq, Palestinians and Israelis are further apart than ever and Shamir now feels no need even to negotiate over Palestinian demands.●
Fay Blake and Morton Newman, Berkeley, California

Fabian Fabulism

Eric Hobsbawm's reassertion of the case for socialism (*MT* April) concentrates on the question of economics and systems, at which, he suggests, socialists have not been any more skilled than capitalists. In doing so, he avoids the central question of democracy. Indeed, his view that a modern understanding of socialism did not develop in Britain until the late-19th century, thereby accepting Fabian interpretations of the question, emphasises this point.

No mention, for example, of Ernest Jones' Chartist programme of 1851, which called for a mixture of socialism and democracy which still has relevance today. The Fabians tried to write Jones out of history; for them the idea that there was a heritage in this country of socialism from below was to be avoided at all costs. One hopes that such a distinguished historian as Professor Hobsbawm is not falling into the same trap.●
Joseph Lane, London

We omitted to point out in the April issue that Eric Hobsbawm's article was based on the 1991 James Larkin lecture, sponsored by SIPTU and Dublin City University.

Canonical Law

Allan Massie's account (*MT* April) of two centuries of European novels seems oddly Edwardian. He doles out accolades to novelists from the major nation-states, rather like a diplomat or the Nobel prize jury. This doesn't allow in the least for all those novels which are not either national, not even provincial, but local, or not so much committed to state politics as to other sorts of politics entirely.

This renders his account of the literature of the 20th century quite inadequate, because his ideas are based on the 19th-century concept of 'big history'. By this time we surely have a more democratised idea of what history is about.

Naturally, in addition, this is why he manages to name just two women in the whole of 200 years (and those women happen to be Colette and Muriel Spark). So much for Austen, George Eliot, Georges Sand, Karen Blixen, Natalie Ginsburg and Agneta Pleijel...

Of course, to name a list in this way is to fall into the trap of constructing an alternative canon to Massie's list of men; but for him to have ignored all these women, and the many others he could have chosen, is certainly significant.●
Professor Marilyn Butler, King's College, Cambridge

Cartoon: Nick Newman

Cyber Is Rosy

So Liz Holliday (*MT* May) says that cyberpunk is dead. Funny, then, that the April issue of *PCW* says that it's just come out of the closet. Virtual reality can't take the place of cyberpunk, as Holliday suggests.

Books, movies and virtual reality can be classified as mediums, while cyberpunk (like westerns) forms the environment. I'm quite sure that, given an advance in technology, Holliday will soon be able to play the part of William Gibson's character Case – rather than read about him.●
Samin Ashtiaq, London

Dead On Cue

Charles Shaar Murray (*MT* May), in case you forgot: 1991 is also a zero-in-the-year anniversary for another croaked legend. Gene Vincent.●
Mike Weller, London

Prize Draw Result:

DF Scargill of Bradford wins the weekend for two in Dublin.

Editorial Note:

We welcome your letters to add to discussion. Please send them to *MT* Letters, 6-9 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF, or fax them to 071-278-4427, enclosing a daytime phone number. Brevity means you are more likely to be published. We reserve the right to cut.●

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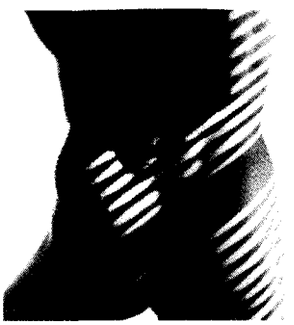

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Suzanne Moore

Josh Pulman

Telling the sexes apart

Spot The Difference

I have increasing problems with the opposite sex. I just don't know how opposite they are anymore. Or in what way. But I'm not the only one. The question of 'sexual difference' is one that our culture continually tries to answer. It pops up in every conceivable context. Are men and women fundamentally the same or fundamentally different? Ask this question of mice and men and you will get completely different answers. The week after it was announced that women cannot enter the pavilion at Lord's – it just ain't cricket and obviously they just ain't the same species – we were told nonchalantly that the injection of a single gene can turn a female mouse embryo into a 'red-blooded male'.

It is reassuring to know that such research would never be applied to humans as the males produced are sterile, and what use would there ever be for such creatures? (Answers on a postcard please.) But it's intriguing to think the sexes are separated by a lonely gene. And of course the odd bit of social conditioning. Yet whether you go with the nature or the nurture side of the debate, both are at various times held responsible for an infinite number of quirks.

Pick up any magazine or paper and you will find it asking why a woman can't be more like a man or vice versa. There is not a subject that doesn't seethe with secrets about sexual difference. Take food for instance. Men like soup and women like salad. Men go for red meat, women for fish mousse. I didn't glean this essential information from *Bella* but from the high-minded *Food and Drink* section of *The Independent*.

But never mind our bellies. Our brains are actually different too. It says so in *BrainSex*. And now according to Debora Tannen, professor of linguistics at Georgetown University, we find out that we also speak different languages. Her book, *You Just Don't Understand: Women And Men In Conversation*, has been well received. And no wonder, it lets us all off the hook. This is not some rabid feminist polemic but a mild-mannered and ultra-responsible text that makes every effort to explain the 'genderlect' of each sex to the other. Thus women, we learn, speak a language of 'intimacy and connection', men one of 'status and independence'.

Tannen gives countless everyday examples that will have every reader nodding in recognition. A man says he has a headache. The woman offers sympathy by saying: 'Yes, I know how you feel, I had a terrible headache yesterday'. He gets cross because he thinks she is trying to belittle his problem when in fact she is just trying to show she understands.

Much of what Tannen says does not strike me as particularly new. Empirical studies have shown for some time that there are real differences in the way that men and women talk. Men tend to make direct statements for example, women turn everything into a question. Women command a greater vocabulary, especially of trivia – women will call something mauve or lilac whereas men will just plump for purple. We also know that this goes back to the way that little girls and boys communicate with each other.

What is interesting about Tannen's book, however, is not so much what she says but *the way she says it*. Hers is a resigned plea that women and men work together to break through these language barriers in order to banish these misunderstandings. She is always conciliatory, never angry. Where male domination exists, it may not always be intended but result from a difference in conversational style – men and women are simply different and we have to start from this. As she says: 'Pretending that men and women are the same hurts women, because the ways in which they are treated are based on the norms for men'.

It is her causal and pragmatic acceptance of difference that seems, to me, representative of this newer phase of feminism. For years, the goal of the feminist and, indeed, any vaguely liberal project, has been to prove that we are basically all the same – whether male or female, black or white – and to show that 'biology' should never be destiny.

Instead we have turned to every theoretical tool from psychoanalysis to poststructralism to explain that what we believe to be our true selves is only the result of social conditioning and, indeed, language itself. In demanding equal rights we have become pathologically obsessed with showing that we are all identical. Equal has to mean the same. But we don't all feel the same. Or look the same. Or act the same. Is it possible to speak of difference and equality in the same breath? Is is possible to describe the living experience of sexual difference without the dreaded lapse into essentialism? Its a dodgy area in which one has both to acknowledge the role of social conditioning and then disavow it in order to promise change.

The point that emerges from Tannen's book is not to get women to learn to speak more like men by compulsory assertiveness training or to get men to be more like women by getting them to learn some awful kind of therapy-speak. It is just that they have to learn each other's language in order to stop the general communication breakdown. This policy of separate development appears to have its appeal perhaps because so many women are tired of the unrewarding task of trying to change men. And many men perceive feminism as merely an over-developed form of nagging.

Something in all this makes me uneasy, however. Perhaps because the power differences between men and women are too easily reducible to a series of personal interactions, without addressing larger systematic abuses of power. And because I wonder, who will it be that makes the effort to learn this new lingo? Will you? Like the stand-up comic says: 'Women, can't live with them – can't shoot them'. The question is, then, can you talk to them?●

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Britain's Days Of Judgement

We are in the midst of our second great recession in a decade. There is a surprising consensus among politicians about its causes and cures. **Charlie Leadbeater** disagrees. He argues that something much more radical is needed

To suffer one recession of great savagery in a decade is bad; to suffer two such recessions is a disaster. A decade after it emerged from the worst recession in the postwar era, Britain is mired deep in the second worst recession since world war two. It is a remarkable achievement of the Thatcher governments to have engineered two recessions of such power in such a short space of time.

The recession of 1990-91 swept from the retailers and the construction companies, into brick-makers and property developers. It has embraced the banks and defence companies, the southern service sector as well as the northern manufacturing sector, people in white-collar jobs as well as manual jobs. It will cut deep into British society. Unemployment will rise to close on 3m next year. This year investment will fall by at least 10%, manufacturing output by 5% and output in the economy as a whole by 2%, according to the government's own predictions in the budget.

At the moment the economy is delicately poised apparently on the verge of recovery. A desperate search is on to find the bottom to the recession. Many of the conditions for recovery are in place. Confidence is improving. Interest rates, inflation and mortgage rates are heading down, while profits are starting to recover. There are hopes that the US will soon emerge from its recession fuelling recovery elsewhere.

Yet there are significant risks that recovery will not appear later in the year, and the recession may have its life extended well into next year. The banks might squeeze back on credit. The recession in the US might last longer than people have been expecting. The German economy might be dragged down by the burdens of reunification. Rapidly rising unemployment will cast a pall across the economy depressing the confidence of consumers threatened with job losses.

But even if recovery does arrive on schedule this will still have been a recession of considerable magnitude. It can surely be no coincidence that Britain should be prone to such disruptive economic upheavals with such alarming regularity. There should be a clear explanation. Indeed there was for the recession of 1980–81. It marked the end of an era in British society, the final death knell of Keynesianism, the culmination of the long crisis of failing international competitiveness in much of British industry, the end of corporatism in government and the start of an attack on the traditional cultures of work and trade unionism in manufacturing. The recession of 1980-81 was like a cauldron from which new programmes for modernisation emerged both within politics, with the Thatcherite agenda for radical reform, and within companies, which embarked on radical restructuring.

Yet if 1980-81 was a watershed, it is difficult to ascribe such clear meaning to this recession. But without a clear explanation of what has led us to recession, it will be difficult to devise policies with a hope of overcoming the weaknesses it has exposed. Assessing the meaning of this recession is perhaps the central question in British politics.

Recessions are not just economic events. They are great upheavals which reach deep into society. Recessions are judgements of failure upon the way societies organise their economic affairs. What is being put to the test is not just a set of economic policies but a way of organising an economy. This recession should tell us what works and what does not work, not just in the British economy but in British society as a whole. This recession should set the agenda for politics in the 1990s.

There should be two main elements to that agenda. First, we need to establish the causes of the recession. Clearly the formal economic policies the government pursued, particularly the way interest rates were held down and then raised, were the immediate reason why a slowdown became a downturn before finally turning into fully-fledged recession in the autumn of last year. Yet policy alone cannot explain the intensity of this recession, nor the general conditions which make Britain so prone to recession.

Second, from now on programmes of economic reform will have to embrace far more than formal economic policies. The causes of this recession are complicated and deeply embedded within the structure and culture of British society. A programme for economic modernisation will only succeed if it is a programme to modernise society. This is a recession not just of an economy which has failed to modernise but also of a society which has failed to modernise.

The requirement that economic programmes should be far more than a macro-economic policy with a bit of industrial policy tagged on the end is in stark contrast to 1980-81 when the debate turned around the clash between Keynesians and monetarists. It is significant that there has been almost no macro-economic debate accompanying this recession. There is a near consensus between the parties on narrow

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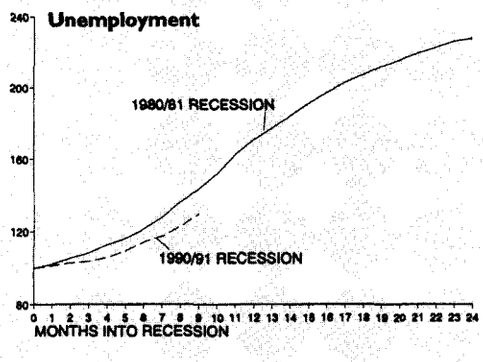
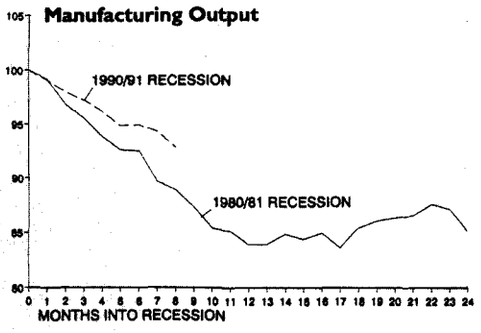
Recessions Compared

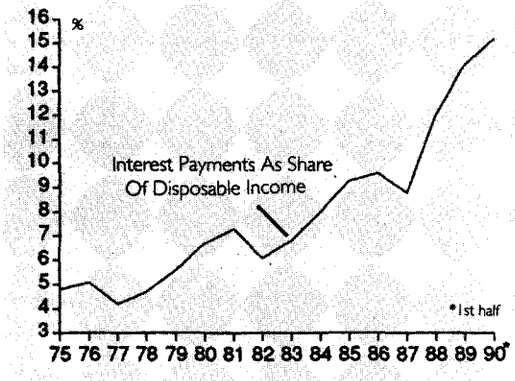




CBI Survey - Comparisons With The 1980 Recession

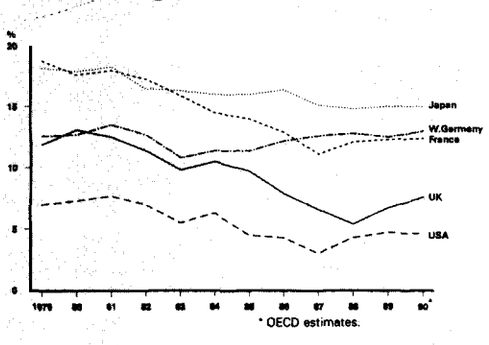
	1980				1990		1991	
Percentage Balance	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**
Business Optimism	-45	-41	-70	-54	-27	-47	-51	-17
Investment In Plant & Machinery	-18	-18	-43	-46	-7	-15	-31	-33
Firms Working Below Capacity (%)	63	70	76	84	49	54	60	68

The Growing Burden Of Personal Debt



How Britain Doesn't Save Compared With Other Countries

Personal Savings Ratios, 1979-90



macro-economic issues such as Britain's membership of the exchange rate mechanism and the need for tight control of public borrowing. In the early 1980s it was the monetarists who led the move to the right. Then macro-economics was radical and revolutionary. Now it is exhausted and consensual. From now on economic programmes will have to focus on reforming social institutions, such as the education system, and promoting a new economic culture in society, as much as laying down new rules for the money supply. Economic goals will only be achieved through a social modernisation which extends well beyond economics.

The idea that the response to this recession should be a radical and far-reaching programme of modernisation also stands in stark contrast to the current ethos of politics. There is a tacit conspiracy afoot between the Labour and Conservative leaderships to return British politics to a dull, uninspiring, unambitious pragmatism – a kind of realistic defeatism in the face of the scale of Britain's difficulties. This retreat into conservative pragmatism is escapism. It is impossible for a society to go through a recession as intense as this and come out the other side as if nothing has really happened. Britain does indeed need a consensus. But it needs to be a strategic modernising consensus which will carry society forwards rather than a feeble consensus which will hardly move it at all.

'Lawson's largesse fuelled an extraordinary consumption boom, which swept through the high street like an economic tidal wave'

The urgent need for a consensus of modernisation is evident from an examination of the factors which led Britain over the precipice into recession. This recession is the combination of four ingredients.

1 Traditional economic policies have played an important role, particularly policies on interest rates and the exchange rate.

2 The effect of these policies has been amplified by Britain's economic culture: what value we give to education and training; consumption and investment; investment in housing and investment in industry.

3 The third ingredient is industrial structure: the balance between manufacturing and services, the relationship between finance and industry.

4 The final ingredient is the international position of an economy. Is a nation a borrower or a lender, a net exporter or importer: is it driving international competition or being driven by it?

These four elements reinforce one another to create either vicious or virtuous circles of economic performance. In successful economies like Germany and Japan, they work together in a virtuous circle to produce the two most important characteristics of economic success – dynamism and discipline. They are dynamic economies because they produce growth, with high productivity and technological sophistication. They are dynamic because they constantly move forward – they create wealth rather than living off the accumulated riches of the past. This dynamism is partly the product of economic policies to favour investment, partly the product of a culture of education, skills and learning, and partly the product of an industrial structure, relationships between banks and companies, industry and the state. It is this interlocking nexus of policies, structure and culture which produces the energy.

Their discipline is both economic and social. It resides in their cautious, anti-inflationary economic policies. In both societies there is a considerable social discipline about work, education and investment. They do not suffer sudden surges in inflation, unemployment or imports. Both have strong collective cultures of duty and obligation.

These characteristics mean Germany and Japan occupy the most powerful positions within the world economy. And their strength is reflected in the greater discretion they have over the policies they are able to pursue domestically. In Britain it is a different story. In the UK these four ingredients combine to produce an endemically weak, economic performance. The British economy is neither dynamic, nor disciplined by international standards. In the UK the four ingredients combine to produce the viciously unstable circle of recession.

The starting point of the tale is economic policy. The central character, the villain of the piece, is the one-time darling of the Conservative Party, economic miracle-maker Nigel Lawson.

The Lawson charge-sheet reads as follows. During 1987 and 1988 he kept interest rates down too low, for too long and cut taxes too far. The government was concerned that the stock market crash of late 1987 would puncture the economy. So it pumped in money to keep the balloon aloft. Lawson's largesse fuelled an extraordinary consumption boom, which swept through the high street and the housing estate

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like an economic tidal wave. It was as if the economy had consumed a hallucinogenic substance. House prices, share prices, wages, borrowing and consumption all seemed to be heading ever higher in a tumultuous, intoxicating, dizzying climb. By late 1988 it had all got out of hand, with inflation rising and the balance of payments in enormous deficit as demand sucked in imports. The government put the brakes on. Interest rates went up. Lawson The Unassailable departed the chancellorship.

The rise in interest rates in 1989 started the long downswing which led us to recession. Those parts of the economy closest to the consumer and home-owner began to suffer – estate agents, the housebuilders, the brick-makers, the home furnishings manufacturers. Retailers reigned in. It was a recession which most afflicted the over-borrowed south east. The dive into recession last year was mainly due to the build up of momentum behind the interest rate squeeze as the effects spread across the economy.

But it was helped by Britain's entry into the ERM at a central rate, to the D-mark, of 2.95, which many British businessmen feel to be too high. The domestic economy of construction and retail was already suffering. The move into the ERM put pressure upon manufacturing businesses operating in international markets.

Economic policy is obviously a central cause of this recession. There are macro-economic remedies which flow from that. Sterling's membership of the ERM is not just designed to get inflation down to internationally sustainable levels in the short run. It is meant to be a long-term discipline. Our membership of the ERM will set constraints on other elements of policy such as public spending and taxation, interest rate policy and the money supply.

Yet policies were only the catalyst for recession. The potential for recession was inherent in the relationship between economic policy, economic culture and economic structure. The causes of this recession are deeper and more complicated than a series of misjudgements the blame for which can be loaded on Lawson's ample shoulders.

The inflationary boom which led us to recession was as much a product of the economic culture which the government fostered as it was a result of its interest rate policies. The boom was created in estate agents up and down the land, not just in the hallowed corridors of the Treasury. It was as much a product of individual behaviour in society as the behaviour of the chancellor.

Recall what it was like walking down the average high street in the mid-1980s. The estate agent's window became a vital social reference point as people glanced in to see how much their house had risen in value since they last passed. In Germany they feel wealthier by producing more. In the UK you could feel wealthier simply by walking down the high street. It was a time of ever expanding opportunity to consume. High street retailing was going through a revolution, led by the likes of Ralph Halpern at Burtons and George Davies at Next. The means came courtesy of American Express or Access. There are more credit cards in the UK than in the rest of the European Community combined.

'To seek an interview with a bank manager was like a confessional, in which a request for debt was tantamount to an admission of sin'

The banks played a central role in fuelling the boom. They went through an abrupt change of personality. The caricature used to be that bank managers worked in offices rather like cupboards. They thought that going to bed after 9.30pm during the week was an adventurous excitement. To seek an interview with a bank manager was like a confessional, in which a request for debt was tantamount to an admission of sin. Bank managers of old were a band of financial prefects, policing the morality of our financial behaviour. Bankers did not just deal in money, they dealt in moral and social values – respectability, security, caution, respect for the social order.

In the 1980s all that changed. Legislation opened up the credit market, the banks and building societies pumped money into the pockets of willing borrowers. Banks began to advertise loans as if they were fashion or life-style accessories. Debt was transformed from sin into the fountain of pleasure.

The expansion of borrowing was wrapped up with the growth of home-ownership. More relaxed mortgage lending allowed more people to buy homes. These homes then became the security people used for further borrowing to buy furnishings, microwaves, cars and videos. And the home was, of course, both the material and the moral basis for Thatcherism.

So what created the Lawson boom was a complex combination of economic policy, deregulation of credit markets, new commercial strategies pursued by the banks and building societies and a flowering of debt-financed consumer culture in the high street and the housing estate. It seems equally obvious that any economic programme to curb the inflationary potential in the British economy must deal with this culture as much as the economic policies which nurtured it.

That means reform on several fronts – re-regulation of the financial services sector, reform of mortgage finance and the promotion of alternative policies which stress the importance of long-term investment in education and training. There must be a shift from a culture of consumption to a culture of investment, from making money by fiddling with financial assets to creating wealth by investment in the real economy, by upholding the importance of investment in knowledge rather than in semi-detached Wimpey homes. We need to shift away from the spivvy enterprise culture which brought us

Case Study

How One Engineering Group Changed For The Better In The 1980s

TI Group was formed in 1919 in Birmingham as Tube Investment and was for years the second largest engineering group in the UK.

By the time it reached the 1980-81 recession, it had accumulated a diverse range of loosely linked engineering activities stretching from steel tube manufacturing and machine tools to domestic appliances in the shape of Russell Hobbs and Raleigh bicycles. It also had a stake in some small joint ventures making sealing systems and piping for cars and refrigerators.

In short, TI was a mess. The recession exacted an enormous toll as the company faced up to mounting competition from overseas. In the past 10 years it has been transformed from a traditional sprawling Midlands engineering group, with a high proportion of its sales in the UK, into a tightly focused international specialist engineering group with only 15% of its sales in the UK.

The group's reshaping started with the sale of its long-standing stake in commodity steel tube-making. But its other businesses continued to deteriorate, apart from Russell Hobbs, the domestic appliance business.

In 1986, a new management was installed under the leadership of Christopher Lewinton, an Anglo-American manager. He recognised that the group was not large enough to survive in the global domestic appliances industry and needed to get out of many of its traditional activities. In turn, many of the businesses were sold. Out went machine tools, seamless steel tubes, Raleigh bicycles, Creda cookers and Russell Hobbs, which was sold to Asil Nadir's Polly Peck. The corporate engineering giant, whose sheer span was once so impressive, was dismantled.

The group was renamed TI, new management styles were brought in and it was internationalised. Of the more than 50 subsidiaries TI had in 1983, only 11 remain. Sales in the UK have gone from 56% of total sales in 1981 to 17% in 1989. It is no longer attempting to be a full line, wide-ranging engineering group. Instead it has focused upon three niche markets – specialised seals, tubing systems and other special engineering products – in which it can command an international position.

TI was forced into radical restructuring by the last recession. It will probably come through this recession in much better shape.●

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Join us...

Three out of four people want Britain to have a Bill of Rights.

When asked if "Britain needs a Bill of Rights to protect the liberty of the individual": a majority of seventy-two per cent said that they tended to agree or that they agreed strongly.*

It was a majority among women (**71%**) and men (**73%**).

A majority amongst all ages, from those between eighteen and twenty-four (**76%**), to those over sixty-five (**64%**).

A majority among all classes, whether they call themselves middle-class (**63%**) or working class (**76%**).

A majority of trade unionists (**78%**), of those in work (**72%**), and those out of work (**80%**).

A majority of those who own their own homes (**70%**), and among those who live in council houses (**78%**).

A majority of Conservative voters (**62%**).
A majority of Liberal-Democrats (**74%**).
A majority of Labour voters (**83%**).

In fact, so far as we can see, a majority of all major groups want a Bill of Rights, except one: the politicians.

Our politicians are denying us what we want.
Let's stop them.

Add your name to ours – today. For Charter 88 can make the change happen. We raise the right issues, debate their implications, lobby the parties, and campaign with effect.

Join us now. And help us put on open record the names of everyone who signs and participates in Charter 88 (there will soon be more than 25,000).

If we really want our rights, then together we can change the way Britain is run. Add your name to Charter 88.

*Figures drawn from a MORI survey, commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, of 1,034 adults across 146 constituencies, conducted face-to-face, in home, between 7th and 25th March 1991.

CHARTER 88

The inscription of laws does not guarantee their realisation. Only people themselves can ensure freedom, democracy and equality before the law. Nonetheless, such ends are far better demanded, and more effectively obtained and guarded, once they belong to everyone by inalienable right.

We call therefore for a new constitutional settlement which will:

1. Enshrine, by means of a Bill of Rights, such civil liberties as the right to peaceful assembly, to freedom of association, to freedom from discrimination, to freedom from detention without trial, to trial by jury, to privacy and to freedom of expression.

2. Subject executive powers and prerogatives, by whomsoever exercised, to the rule of law.

3. Establish freedom of information and open government.

4. Create a fair electoral system of proportional representation.

5. Reform the upper house to establish a democratic, non-hereditary second chamber.

6. Place the executive under the power of a democratically renewed parliament and all agencies of the state under the rule of law.

7. Ensure the independence of a reformed judiciary.

8. Provide legal remedies for all abuses of power by the state and by officials of central and local government.

9. Guarantee an equitable distribution of power between the nations of the United Kingdom and between local, regional and central government.

10. Draw up a written constitution, anchored in the idea of universal citizenship, that incorporates these reforms.

I want to sign Charter 88: Name

Address

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I would also like to make a contribution. I enclose a cheque ☐ or please debit my Access/Visa/ Account No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

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short-lived, debt-financed business success stories such as Sock Shop, towards a culture based on asset formation. We need to stop living off accumulated assets of our past and start building up assets. Achieving such a shift in economic culture must be absolutely central to any programme of economic reform.

Like a great feast, this gluttonous boom needed a large and steady table to be spread out upon. But the industrial base on which it was conducted was not strong enough. The boom exposed the weakness of the industrial base in the form of ballooning manufacturing trade deficits, as our debt-financed splurge sucked in imports. Too much of demand was met by imports from foreign producers. As the trade deficit widened so sterling came under greater pressure.

The recession has highlighted how partial a modernisation British industry went through in the 1980s. There were important improvements. Although this recession is deep it has not yet been accompanied by anything like the sense of mounting crisis in industry which accompanied the recession of 1980-81.

The main achievement of the 1980s was to transform productivity within manufacturing companies. Between 1980 and 1987 output per person rose by 24% in real terms in the UK, compared with 22% in Japan, 12% to 14% in Germany, Italy and France and 7% in the US. British companies are far more efficient than they were at making products. But according to other more sophisticated measures of competitiveness such as innovation, research and development, or qualifications, education and training, the record has been disappointing.

British manufacturing is strong internationally only in a few traditional areas such as chemicals and pharmaceuticals (ICI, Glaxo, Welcome, Beecham), aerospace (British Aerospace, GEC, Smiths Industries), and food processing (British American Tobacco, Unilever, United Biscuits). In the 1980s reindustrialisation and modernisation in areas such as consumer electronics and motor manufacturing has almost entirely been due to investment by foreign-owned companies. British industry shows little capacity to really regenerate itself. By the measures of dynamism in Germany and Japan, and even those of Italy and France, British industry is still not particularly dynamic; it is still living off the past.

The weakness of the manufacturing sector is mirrored by the overweening role of the service sector which was the most powerful source of inflationary pressures. In the last recession there was a sense that the whole country was being forced to pay a price to deal with the deficiencies of manufacturing industry based in the Midlands and the north of England. In this recession we are being forced to pay the price for the overheating of the service sector based in the south-east. The growth of the service sector has created an economy which is sectorally and regionally unbalanced, with a still weak manufacturing base overshadowed by a southern-based service sector, much of which is organised around the City of London.

'The boom exposed the weakness of the industrial base in the form of ballooning manufacturing trade deficits, as our debt-financed splurge sucked in imports'

The power of this recession has been the interplay of the structural weaknesses, misguided economic policies and a borrow-now, pay-later economic culture. British industry is still not internationally strong enough to support the lifestyle the British people have become accustomed to. We have an economic culture, expectations and aspirations which are not fully sustainable given the weakness of our economic base. The weakness of the base is partly explained by the way our economic culture favours consumption over investment in education, and investment in housing over investment in productive assets. If British industry were more able to supply home demand and compete internationally, Britain would be less prone to trade deficits and the currency would be less vulnerable. This in turn would create greater room for discretion over economic policy. So policy, structure and culture are locked in a circle in which they reinforce one another.

The final ingredient of the recession is arguably the most powerful for it forms the context for all debates about economic policies, culture and structure. It is the changing shape of the international economy and Britain's position within it. This recession is the latest stage in Britain's long accommodation to its economic decline, failing international competitiveness and loss of international economic prestige. The recession of 1980-81 happened against a backdrop of world recession caused by oil price rises and a recognition of the mounting competitive threat posed by Japanese producers.

This recession is a mark of the UK's continuing international weakness. The acceptance of that has already led to a far-reaching change in economic strategy. Britain's full membership of the ERM is an historic shift. It is a recognition that sterling, once a world currency, is not strong enough to weather the international capital markets on its own. It had to seek the collective security of the ERM as a safe haven. Britain is becoming a European economy rather than a world economy in its own right. This recession is the cost we are paying to bolt the UK economy onto the rest of Europe and the German powerhouse in particular. This is the start of a long accommodation which will work through economic policies into the rest of our economic lives. We will have to match the German standard in many things we do – in productivity growth and rises in unit costs, in our approach to investment and consumption, home-ownership and pay bargaining. The discipline of ERM membership will only work if it changes our economic culture as well as our economic policies.

Britain's membership of the ERM will in time lead to even greater economic, monetary and industrial union. This will push through structural changes in industry as companies are forced to focus more clearly upon specialisms they can exploit as European suppliers, not just national producers. Companies will increasingly have to adopt pan-European policies.

The second international development which has fed the recession is the end of the cold war and the uncertainty of the new world order. This has had a mixture of effects. The dismantling of the Berlin wall and the reunification of Germany has created uncertainty about the prospects for world growth. The fear is that the German engine will crash into the buffers and all the carriages which follow in its wake, the other European economies, will concertina up in recession. Most significantly for the UK, the end of the cold war has cast a shadow over its sizeable defence industries. In 1980-81 the defence manufacturers were a source of stability as the rest of manufacturing suffered. This time around they are at the forefront of job losses and contraction. Within the overall recession there is a distinct defence recession. This is not just a short-term concern. It poses a long-term issue for British economic reform. With its historic over-dependence upon defence, the UK is particularly vulnerable to cuts in defence spending. Strategies to adjust to this change will have to be a central ingredient in economic programmes in the 1990s.

So what tasks will this recession set for politics in the 1990s? What lessons can we learn about how economic policy should be conducted?

The most important conclusion is that the elements which make up economic success or failure are increasingly complex and inseparable. Once debate about economic reform was concentrated on the differing appeals of macro-economic policies. In future economic programmes will need to be much more comprehensive in their scope. They will have to be programmes to modernise society by changing its culture, customs and institutions. That means taking on vested interests such as the mortgage tax relief; investing in education; addressing the relationship between banks and industry. Among the failings of Thatcherism was that it relied too heavily upon macro-economics and limited its radicalism mainly to privatisation and labour market reform. In the 1990s we will need much more ambitious programmes of modernisation. This is no time for pragmatism. Britain needs continued radicalism, albeit of a different kind.●

The second part of this article – the agenda for the social market – will appear next month.

Charlie Leadbeater is the industrial editor of the Financial Times

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Michael O'Brien/Select

When East met West: Consuming passions

Germany's Morning After

After the euphoria, the depression. The downside of German reunification is now all too obvious, both to easterners and westerners. **Richard Evans** explains

What has been happening in Germany during the last few months? Nearly a year has passed since the unification of the two currencies at the beginning of July 1990, and it is now nine months since the formal political union of the two parts of the country was completed. Memories are still fresh of the euphoria that accompanied the breaching of the Berlin wall in November 1989, of the excitement generated by the unfolding drama of the collapse of the Honecker regime and its immediate, communist-dominated successors in East Germany, of the anxieties expressed outside Germany as the inevitability of reunification became clear. Since then other events, from the Gulf war to the recent catastrophes in the Third World, have pushed the continuing transformation of central Europe into the background. Yet in the intervening period, it has become clear that the excited predictions voiced in 1989-90 about the resurgence of German nationalism, and the alarmist warnings about the prospect of a Europe dominated by a new German economic superpower were very wide of the mark. Instead, anxiety, despondency and alarm have spread within Germany itself as the true costs of reunification have begun to become apparent. And in place of a triumphant new German nationalism the last few months have revealed deep and growing antagonisms between the inhabitants of the two states into which Germany was for so long divided. The wall may have disappeared in a physical sense, but it still exists in people's minds.

Many thought a year or two ago that reunification marked the recovery of some sort of long-submerged German national feeling or identity. But in many ways German national consciousness remains fragmented and problematical. An opinion poll taken for the news magazine *Der Spiegel* in November 1990 in western and eastern Germany found that only two-thirds of those questioned felt proud or very proud to be German – a significantly lower proportion than in other countries such as Britain or the USA, where the comparable figure was more than 20% higher. And the same poll revealed significant differences between eastern and western Germans. Only 21% of easterners believed in God, for example, as compared with 61% of westerners. 79% of westerners had a good opinion of the USA, compared with only 60% of easterners. Even in July 1990 a poll taken in East Berlin showed that only 48% of East Germans felt themselves to be Germans: the rest preferred to think of themselves as 'GDR Germans' or even 'GDR citizens'. The poll concluded that it would take them at least a decade 'to find a new identity in a new Germany'.

Another striking opinion poll finding revealed a surprising degree of ignorance in both parts of Germany about how the other half lived, or indeed even where the other half was. Asked in November 1990 to point out the south-western state of Baden-Württemberg on a map, 71% of easterners proved unable to do so. And 68% of westerners found it impossible to say where the east German province of Thuringia was. Over three-quarters of west Germans had in fact no relations in the east and had never been there, even in the 12 months after the fall of the Berlin wall. Easterners thought westerners more arrogant, ruthless, egotistical, mistrustful, self-confident and hostile to children than they were, but admitted that they themselves were more indecisive, uncertain, lazy and provincial than their western fellow-citizens.

The most striking finding of the survey data in many ways is that which showed that some three-quarters of easterners considered themselves to be second-class citizens in the new Germany – a figure that had increased to 86% by January 1991. Only 46% of westerners agreed with this view. This difference of opinion in itself was further evidence of the ignorance prevailing in the west about conditions in the east. Around two-thirds of easterners polled for *Der Spiegel* in November 1990 thought that the old communist German Democratic Republic had been superior to the western Federal Republic in social security, freedom from crime, and equality for women. 63% said that they were unwilling to accept the fact that the state might no longer guarantee day-care facilities for the children of working parents, as the Honecker regime in the east had done. But such views have counted for little in the unification process, and even the maintenance of the liberal East German abortion law, which is approved of by a majority of western as well as eastern Germans, is only guaranteed for a limited period of time.

Unification, in practice, has been achieved by the simple incorporation of the five East German provinces into the existing structure of the West German state, not by any genuine merging of the two. But it is not only a feeling of having lost their previous identity as East Germans – tenuous though that feeling undoubtedly was – without having gained a satisfactory new identity in its place, that is troubling the inhabitants of the 'five new provinces'. The decisive factor is economic. Years of watching orgies of consumerism on West German television gave the East Germans an appetite for affluence that the Honecker regime was able neither to satisfy nor to control. In many ways the revolution of October-November 1989 was a consumer revolution.

What this meant in practice could be seen in the fact that in July 1990 alone – the first month of economic unity – easterners bought as many motor cars as in the whole of 1989 (200,000 in all), while in the 12 months following the breaching of the Berlin wall, easterners purchased no fewer than 800,000 video

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recorders on their shopping forays into the west. This was the force that undermined the Honecker regime from within and prevented its short-lived successors from stabilising themselves. And the consumerist passions of the easterners were further fuelled during and after the East German election campaign of spring 1990 by West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's reckless promises of a prosperous future once unification had been achieved.

Western analysts were dimly aware before July 1990 that economic statistics were widely falsified under the Honecker regime, and that its claim to be one of the world's top industrial nations, with a gross domestic product higher even than that of the United Kingdom, had to be taken with a considerable pinch of salt. And anyone visiting the country could see easily enough that its industry was still stuck mainly in the 1950s and that living standards and conditions were desperately low in comparison to those of most western European nations. Still, nobody seems to have been prepared to find the situation quite as bad as it turned out to be in July 1990. And nobody seems to have given any serious thought as to how to stop it becoming rapidly worse once the cold blast of western competition came in.

Kohl's appeal to western industrialists to invest in the east seems in retrospect to have been no more than political rhetoric. East Germany's industry lost its main markets in the Soviet Union and other eastern bloc countries at a stroke in July 1990 because it now had to be paid in hard currency, and D-Marks were more than the country's former trading partners could afford. For western companies, on the other hand, the small size of the old GDR in market terms – 16m not very affluent people in a total national market of nearly 80m and a European Community market many times larger still – did not justify setting up new plants and factories on its territory. It is far more profitable simply to increase production in existing plants in the west and ship the goods across. Moreover, the Reunification Treaty included a clause stipulating that anyone dispossessed of their property in the GDR after its foundation in 1949 has the legal right to get it back. Well over two million people left their homes and businesses in the East before the wall went up in 1961. Already, over a million lawsuits are in progress as a result of this stipulation. The legal status of many economic enterprises in the east is in dispute, and in this situation, cautious financiers and industrialists in the west are holding their fire.

Even where the situation is reasonably clear, the scale of investment required to make east German enterprises competitive is far beyond anything either west German capital or the reunited German state can finance in the short term. Thus western companies recovering control over eastern plants nationalised under the Ulbricht and Honecker regimes have done so mainly in order to engage in asset-stripping on a gigantic scale. No doubt most industrial enterprises in the east were grossly inefficient, producing inferior quality goods with outdated machinery, polluting the atmosphere with noxious fumes and employing four to five times as many workers as comparable enterprises in the west. But some of them – for example, the Carl Zeiss precision instrument works in Jena – were not as bad as they have been painted, and could have been modernised on the basis of already existing high-quality production, given sufficient foresight and sufficient will to succeed. Instead they have simply been taken over by their western counterparts and effectively shut down.

From August 1989 to August 1990, industrial production in the five eastern provinces fell by 50%. Current projections envisage a further 20% fall by the end of the year, so that in December 1991, east German industry will be producing less than a third of what it was producing only just over two years before. The bulk of this collapse has occurred after economic reunification, so that its speed and suddenness are even more frightening that appears from a first glance at the statistics. Unemployment in the five new provinces rose from an official figure of zero under the old regime to a quarter of the workforce by the end of 1990. In March 1991 there were 800,000 registered unemployed in the eastern provinces and two million more workers on short-time, which in practice meant not actually working at all. By the end of the year, half the workforce will be unemployed. Many of those in employment are in fact working in the west, often being bussed long distances from their homes in the east. All this is far worse than the depression of 1929-33 in Germany, which proved the undoing of the Weimar Republic and provided the essential backdrop to Hitler's rise to power.

The situation in the east seems unlikely to improve rapidly, even though the general view is currently that it will 'bottom-out' by the end of the year. At the moment, average wages in the five new provinces are no more than about a third of those paid in the old Federal Republic for the same jobs. Over the next three or four years it is envisaged that they will rise to a level of equality with the rest of the country. This will slow the recovery of employment substantially. Small wonder, therefore, that up to 30,000 people are still migrating from the territory of the former GDR into the old West Germany every month, following the third of a million or so who went there in 1989-90. By the end of the century experts predict that the population of the former GDR – some 19m in 1950 – will be down to about 14.5m, with a corresponding increase in the population of the western provinces. Since most of the migrants are young skilled workers, the long-term consequences for economic recovery in the east can readily be imagined.

Arriving in the west, the migrants remain second-class citizens, often finding it difficult to get a job with skills that are widely regarded by western employers as out of date. When coupled with the mass migration of ethnic Germans from eastern Europe and people seeking asylum from other parts of the world, this has contributed to a severe housing shortage. There is now an estimated deficit of two million dwellings. 45,000 people are said to be homeless just in the city of Cologne, and one can now see people sleeping rough there in pedestrian underpasses, in scenes reminiscent of Thatcher's Britain.

None of this has endeared Chancellor Kohl to the West German electorate. The old Federal Republic was a dull, complacent, self-satisfied country where the majority of people wanted things to stay as they were. Reunification was a low political priority for governments as well as for voters after the 1950s, and even in 1989-90 issues such as the control of environmental pollution, the stability of the economy and the combating of drug abuse rated as far more important in opinion poll responses. As late as June 1990, 64% of West Germans thought reunification was taking place too quickly. This view was not shared in the East where Chancellor Kohl swept the board in the all-German elections of December 1990. Over the whole country however the chancellor's conservative CDU-CSU scored its worst-ever result in a federal German election. And since then, burdened by the unpopularity of new taxes and national insurance contributions, introduced mainly to pay for economic reconstruction in the east, the Kohl government's popularity has plummeted to a new low. In one provincial election after another, the ruling coalition has been defeated by the opposition Social Democrats and their partners, whose warnings about the likely costs of rapid reunification were thought to have cost them a large number of votes in December last year.

So the dominant view now is is one not of euphoria and pride but of gloom and apprehension. The celebrations of unity day on October 3, 1990 were notable for their restraint. The only outbreak of national enthusiasm in Germany last year occurred when the Federal Republic won the world soccer cup. Questioned in November 1990 as to whether they wanted a united Germany to be the leading power in Europe, only 23% of westerners said yes. 43% were opposed to the idea; as many as a third of westerners questioned did not care either way. There seems no sign, therefore, of a mass resurgence of German nationalism of the sort feared by so many foreign commentators before and during the process of reunification. Indeed, memories of the destruction wrought by the ultra-nationalism and militarism of Hitler's 'Third Reich' ensured that peace demonstrations were

'In December 1991, east German industry will be producing less than a third of what it was producing just over two years before'

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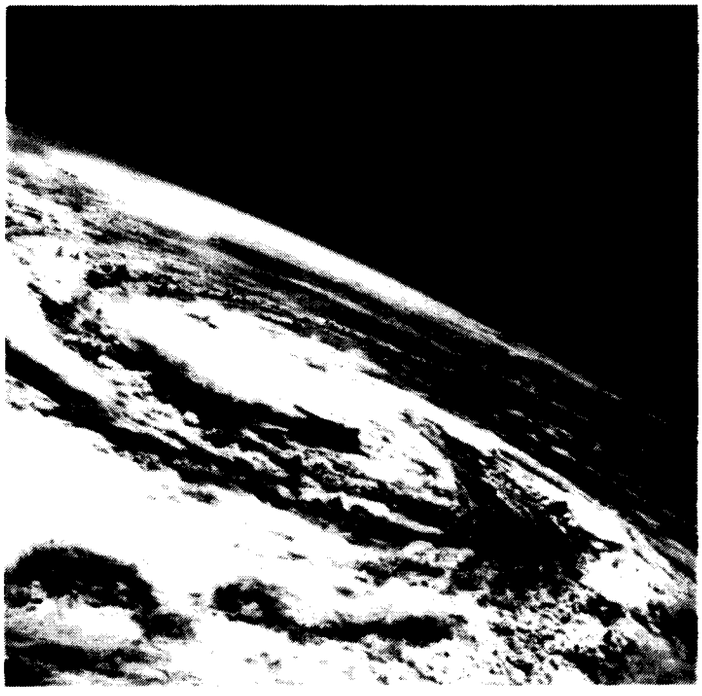

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larger and more widespread in Germany during the Gulf war than anywhere else in Europe, and that the German constitution has not so far been amended in order to enable the government to deploy German armed forces abroad.

As for the eastern provinces, what is emerging begins to look something like a permanent state of inferiority, with the old GDR remaining a collection of run-down and inefficient industrial areas, a reservoir of cheap labour, and a source of produce from the agricultural land that takes up two-thirds of the surface area. Uneven economic growth and regional disparities in living standards are a familiar feature of many industrialised countries in late 20th-century Europe, and it looks as if the north-south divide hitherto observable, even if only in a muted form, in West Germany, will be replaced by an east-west divide in the reunited state. For 40 years and more, East Germany was a colony of the Soviet Union. Now, after a brief power vacuum in which dissident groups were able to enjoy a deceptive period of influence, it has become a colony of West Germany.

Its colonial status has been confirmed not only by the onward march of economic exploitation but also in countless incidents in everyday life, in which far too many of those westerners who actually do venture into the new provinces behave with the arrogance and tactlessness of imperial overlords. Westernisation is proceeding apace. Marx and marxism are being expunged with all the thoroughness once associated with the stalinist rewriting of history so assiduously practised in the party institutes of East Berlin. Publishing houses have disappeared, school textbooks have been replaced, mass media transformed, whole research institutes abolished, university departments shut down – the scale and pace of the transformation is simply dizzying. In the west, commentators and politicians are comparing the process to the postwar denazification campaign. This may have some use as a rhetorical weapon with which to justify the 'winding-down' of the east's educational, research and media establishments, and no doubt the bullies and hacks of the communist regime's state security service deserve everything they get. But when all is said and done, the GDR and its servants were not engaged in mass murder, and Ulbricht and Honecker's crimes, real enough though they were, in no way stand comparison with those of Hitler or even of Stalin. The justice that is currently being meted out to the employees of the former East German state is very rough justice indeed.

'Marx and marxism are being expunged with all the thoroughness once associated with the stalinist rewriting of history'

Popular reactions to reunification in the eastern provinces have been ambivalent. 40 years of Ulbricht and Honecker were enough to give socialism a bad name. But many of the old regime's characteristic features, from state-run creches to safety on the streets, are being increasingly missed. Traffic accidents, a rarity a year ago, are now commonplace. East Germans are having to come to terms with western secondhand car salesmen. And law and order is coming under stress. Neo-Nazi skinheads are now active at football matches in the east, and there are growing numbers of violent attacks on foreign workers and refugees. Fuelled by economic misery, social despair, political disappointment, and a loss of cultural identity, the mood in the east is showing signs of becoming ugly. Of course, it is important not to get all this out of proportion. The vast majority of people in the east still seem prepared to wait for a while until things start to get better. Social welfare provisions extended from the west provide a safety-net against the kind of bitterness and despair that destroyed the Weimar Republic. Yet German reunification so far has provided some classic examples of political irresponsibility, economic mismanagement and social short-sightedness. Amidst all the dramatic reports of economic collapse in the Soviet Union, it is as well to note that the overnight introduction of free market capitalism without sufficient planning and preparation seems only to make things worse. Just how much worse is only now beginning to become apparent.●

Richard Evans is the professor of history at Birkbeck College, London

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A Global Sense Of Place

The world is increasingly dominated by movement – of people, images and information. **Doreen Massey** examines the nature of mobility in the era of globalisation and what this means for our sense of place

This is an era – it is often said – when things are speeding up, and spreading out. Capital is going through a new phase of internationalisation, especially in its financial parts. More people travel more frequently and for longer distances. Your clothes have probably been made in a range of countries from Latin America to South East Asia. Dinner consists of food shipped in from all over the world. And if you have a screen in your office, instead of opening a letter which – care of Her Majesty's Post Office – has taken some days to wend its way across the country, you now get interrupted by e-mail.

This view of the current age is one now frequently found in a wide range of books and journals. Much of what is written about space, place and post-modern times emphasises a new phase in what Marx once called 'the annihilation of space by time'. The process is argued, or – more usually – asserted, to have gained a new momentum, to have reached a new stage. It is a phenomenon which has been called 'time-space-compression'. And the general acceptance that something of the sort is going on is marked by the almost obligatory use in the literature of terms and phrases such as speed-up, global village, overcoming spatial barriers, the disruption of horizons, and so forth.

One of the results of this is an increasing uncertainty about what we mean by 'places' and how we relate to them. How, in the face of all this movement and intermixing, can we retain any sense of a local place and its particularity? An (idealised) notion of an era when places were (supposedly) inhabited by coherent and homogeneous communities is set against the current fragmentation and disruption. The counterposition is anyway dubious, of course; 'place' and 'community' have only rarely been coterminous. But the occasional longing for such coherence is nonetheless a sign of the geographical fragmentation, the spatial disruption, of our times. And occasionally, too, it has been part of what has given rise to defensive and reactionary responses – certain forms of nationalism, sentimentalised recovering of sanitised 'heritages', and outright antagonism to newcomers and 'outsiders'. One of the effects of such responses is that place itself, the seeking after a sense of place, has come to be seen by some as necessarily reactionary.

But is that necessarily so? Can't we re-think our sense of place? Is it not possible for a sense of place to be progressive; not self-enclosing and defensive, but outward-looking? A sense of place which is adequate to this era of time-space-compression? To begin with, there are some questions to be asked about time-space-compression itself. Who is it that experiences it, and how? Do we all benefit and suffer from it in the same way?

For instance, to what extent does the currently popular characterisation of time-space-compression represent very much a Western, coloniser's, view? The sense of dislocation which some feel at the sight of a once well-known local street now lined with a succession of cultural imports – the pizzeria, the kebab house, the branch of the Middle-Eastern bank – must have been felt for centuries, though from a very different point of view, by colonised peoples all over the world as they watched the importation, maybe even used, the products of, first, European colonisation, maybe British (from new forms of transport to liver salts and custard powder), later US, as they learned to eat wheat instead of rice or corn, to drink Coca Cola, just as today we try out enchiladas.

Moreover, as well as querying the ethnocentricity of the idea of time-space-compression and its current acceleration, we also need to ask about its causes: what is it that determines our degrees of mobility, that influences the sense we have of space and place? Time-space-compression refers to movement and communication across space, to the geographical stretching-out of social relations, and to our experience of all this. The usual interpretation is that it results overwhelmingly from the actions of capital, and from its currently-increasing internationalisation. On this interpretation, then, it is time space and money which make the world go round, and us go round (or not) the world. It is capitalism and its developments which are argued to determine our understanding and our experience of space.

But surely this is insufficient. Among the many other things which clearly influence that experience, there are, for instance, race and gender. The degree to which we can move between countries, or walk about the streets at night, or venture out of hotels in foreign cities, is not just influenced by 'capital'. Survey after survey has shown how women's mobility, for instance, is restricted – in a thousand different ways, from physical violence to being ogled at or made to feel quite simply 'out of place' – not by 'capital', but by men. Or, to take a more complicated example, Birkett, reviewing books on women adventurers and travellers in the 19th and 20th centuries, suggests that 'it is far, far more demanding for a woman to wander now than ever before'.[1] The reasons she gives for this argument are a complex mix of colonialism, ex-colonialism, racism, changing gender-relations, and relative wealth. A simple resort to explanation in terms of 'money' or 'capital' alone could not begin to get to grips with the issue. The current speed-up may be strongly determined by economic forces, but it is not the economy

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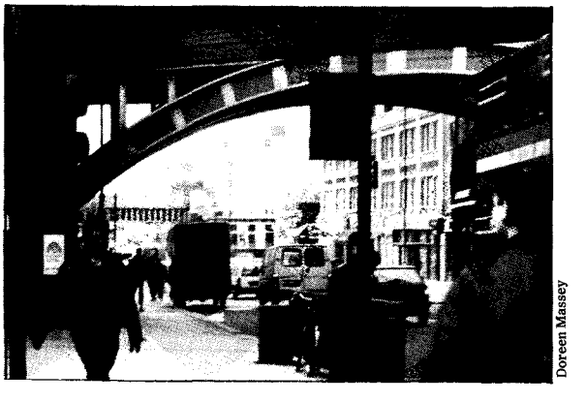

Doreen Massey

Moving at a different pace: Travelling down to earth from the global perspective, control over mobility both reflects and reinforces power

'The seeking after a sense of place has come to be seen by some as necessarily reactionary'

alone which determines our experience of space and place. In other words, and put simply, there is a lot more determining how we experience space than what 'capital' gets up to.

What is more, of course, that last example indicated that 'time-space-compression' has not been happening for everyone in all spheres of activity. Birkett again, this time writing of the Pacific Ocean: 'Jumbos have enabled Korean computer consultants to fly to Silicon Valley as if popping next door, and Singaporean entrepreneurs to reach Seattle in a day. The borders of the world's greatest ocean have been joined as never before. And Boeing has brought these people together. But what about those they fly over, on their islands five miles below? How has the mighty 747 brought them greater communion with those whose shores are washed by the same water? It hasn't, of course. Air travel might enable businessmen to buzz across the ocean, but the concurrent decline in shipping has only increased the isolation of many island communities... Pitcairn, like many other Pacific islands, has never felt so far from its neighbours.'[2]

In other words, and most broadly, time-space-compression needs differentiating socially. This is not just a moral or political point about inequality, although that would be sufficient reason to mention it; it is also a conceptual point.

Imagine for a moment that you are on a satellite, further out and beyond all actual satellites; you can see 'planet earth' from a distance and, rarely for someone with only peaceful intentions, you are equipped with the kind of technology which allows you to see the colours of people's eyes and the numbers on their numberplates. You can see all the movement and tune-in to all the communication that is going on. Furthest out are the satellites, then aeroplanes, the long haul between London and Tokyo and the hop from San Salvador to Guatemala City. Some of this is people moving, some of it is physical trade, some is media broadcasting. There are faxes, e-mail, film-distribution networks, financial flows and transactions. Look in closer and there are ships and trains, steam trains slogging laboriously up hills somewhere in Asia. Look in closer still and there are lorries and cars and buses, and on down further, somewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, there's a woman on foot who still spends hours a day collecting water.

Now, I want to make one simple point here, and that is about what one might call the *power-geometry* of it all; the power geometry of time-space compression. For different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections. This point concerns not merely the issue of who moves and who doesn't, although that is an important element of it; it is also about power in relation *to* the flows and

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the movement. Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it.

In a sense at the end of all the spectra are those who are both doing the moving and the communicating and who are in some way in a position of control in relation to it – the jet-setters, the ones sending and receiving the faxes and the e-mail, holding the international conference calls, the ones distributing the films, controlling the news, organising the investments and the international currency transactions. These are the groups who are really in a sense in charge of time-space-compression, who can really use it and turn it to advantage, whose power and influence it very definitely increases. On its more prosaic fringes this group probably includes a fair number of Western academics and journalists – those, in other words, who write most about it.

But there are also groups who are also doing a lot of physical moving, but who are not 'in charge' of the process in the same way at all. The refugees from El Salvador or Guatemala and the undocumented migrant workers from Michoacán in Mexico, crowding into Tijuana to make a perhaps fatal dash for it across the border into the US to grab a chance of a new life. Here the experience of movement, and indeed of a confusing plurality of cultures, is very different. And there are those from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Caribbean, who come half way round the world only to get held up in an interrogation room at Heathrow.

Or – a different case again – there are those who are simply on the receiving end of time-space-compression. The pensioner in a bed-sit in any inner city in this country, eating British working-class-style fish and chips from a Chinese take-away, watching a US film on a Japanese television; and not daring to go out after dark. And anyway the public transport's been cut.

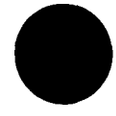
Or – one final example to illustrate a different kind of complexity – there are the people who live in the favelas of Rio, who know global football like the back of their hand, and have produced some of its players; who have contributed massively to global music, who gave us the samba and produced the lambada that everyone was dancing to last year in the clubs of Paris and London; and who have never, or hardly ever, been to downtown Rio. At one level they have been tremendous contributors to what we call time-space-compression; and at another level they are imprisoned in it.

This is, in other words, a highly complex social differentiation. There are differences in the degree of movement and communication, but also in the degree of control and of initiation. The ways in which people are placed within 'time-space-compression' are highly complicated and extremely varied.

But this in turn immediately raises questions of politics. If time-space-compression can be imagined in that more socially formed, socially evaluative and differentiated way, then there may be here the possibility of developing a politics of mobility and access. For it does seem that mobility and control over mobility both reflects and reinforces power. It is not simply a question of unequal distribution, that some people move more than others, and that some have more control than others. It is that the mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people. Differential mobility can weaken the leverage of the already weak. The time-space-compression of some groups can undermine the power of others.

This is well established and often noted in the relationship between capital and labour. Capital's ability to roam the world further strengthens it in relation to relatively immobile workers, enables it to play off the plant at Genk against the plant at Dagenham. It also strengthens its hand against struggling local economies the world over as they compete for the favour of some investment. The 747s that fly computer scientists across the Pacific are part of the reason for the greater isolation today of the island of Pitcairn. But also, every time someone uses a car, and thereby increases their personal mobility, they reduce both the social rationale and the financial viability of the public transport system – and thereby also potentially reduce the mobility of those who rely on that system. Every time you drive to that out-of-town shopping centre you contribute to the rising prices, even hasten the demise, of the corner shop. And the 'time-space-compression' which is involved in producing and reproducing the daily lives of the comfortably-off in First World societies – not just their own travel but the resources they draw on, from all over the world, to feed their lives – may entail environmental consequences, or hit constraints, which will limit the lives of others before their own. We need to ask, in other words, whether our relative mobility and power over mobility and communication entrenches the spatial imprisonment of other groups.

'Every time you drive to the out-of-town shopping centre you contribute to the rising prices, even hasten the demise, of the corner shop'



But this way of thinking about time-space-compression also returns us to the question of place and a sense of place. How, in the context of all these socially-varied time-space-changes do we think about 'places'? In an era when, it is argued, 'local communities' seem to be increasingly broken up, when you can go abroad and find the same shops, the same music as at home, or eat your favourite foreign-holiday food at a restaurant down the road – and when everyone has a different experience of all this – how then do we think about 'locality'?

Many of those who write about time-space-compression emphasise the insecurity and unsettling impact of its effects, the feelings of vulnerability which it can produce. Some therefore go on from this to argue that, in the middle of all this flux, people desperately need a bit of peace and quiet – and that a strong sense of place, of locality, can form one kind of refuge from the hubbub. So the search after the 'real' meanings of places, the unearthing of heritages and so forth, is interpreted as being, in part, a response to desire for fixity and for security of identity in the middle of all the movement and change. A 'sense of place', of rootedness, can provide – in this form and on this interpretation – stability and a source of unproblematical identity. In that guise, however, place and the spatially local are then rejected by many progressive people as almost necessarily reactionary. They are interpreted as an evasion; as a retreat from the (actually unavoidable) dynamic and change of 'real life', which is what we must seize if we are to change things for the better. On this reading, place and locality are foci for a form of romanticised escapism from the real business of the world. While 'time' is equated with movement and progress, 'space'/'place' is equated with stasis and reaction.

There are some serious inadequacies in this argument. There is the question of why it is assumed that time-space-compression will produce insecurity. There is the need to face up to – rather than simply deny – people's need for attachment of some sort, whether through place or anything else. Nonetheless, it is certainly the case that there is indeed at the moment a recrudescence of some very problematical senses of place, from reactionary nationalisms, to competitive localisms, to introverted obsessions with 'heritage'. We need, therefore, to think through what might be an adequately progressive sense of place, one which would fit in with the current global-local times and the feelings and relations they give rise to, *and* which would be useful in what are, after all, political struggles often inevitably based on place. The question is how to hold on to that notion of geographical difference, of uniqueness, even of rootedness if people want that, without it being reactionary.

There are a number of distinct ways in which the 'reactionary' notion of place described above is problematical. One is the idea that places have single, essential, identities. Another is the idea that identity of place – the sense of place – is constructed out of an introverted, inward-looking history based on delving into the past for internalised origins, translating the name from the Domesday Book. Thus Wright recounts the construction and appropriation of Stoke Newington and its past by the arriving middle class (the Domesday Book registers the place as 'Newtowne'... 'There is land for two ploughs and a half... There are four villanes and thirty

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seven cottagers with ten acres', pp 227 and 231), and contrasts this version with that of other groups – the white working class and the large number of important minority communities.[3] A particular problem with this conception of place is that it seems to require the drawing of boundaries. Geographers have long been exercised by the problem of defining regions, and this question of 'definition' has almost always been reduced to the issue of drawing lines around a place. I remember some of my most painful times as a geographer have been spent unwillingly struggling to think how one could draw a boundary around somewhere like the 'East Midlands'. But that kind of boundary around an area precisely distinguishes between an inside and an outside. It can so easily be yet another way of constructing a counterposition between 'us' and 'them'.

And yet if one considers almost any real place, and certainly one not defined primarily by administrative or political boundaries, these supposed characteristics have little real purchase.

Take, for instance, a walk down Kilburn High Road, my local shopping centre. It is a pretty ordinary place, north west of the centre of London. Under the railway bridge the newspaper stand sells papers from every county of what my neighbours, many of whom come from there, still often call the Irish Free State. The postboxes down the High Road, and many an empty space on a wall, are adorned with the letters IRA. Other available spaces are plastered this week with posters for a special meeting in remembrance: Ten Years after the Hunger Strike. At the local theatre Eamon Morrissey has a one-man show; the National Club has the Wolfe Tones on, and at the Black Lion there's Finnegan's Wake. In two shops I notice this week's lottery ticket winners: in one the name is Teresa Gleeson, in the other, Chouman Hassan.

Thread your way through the often almost stationary traffic diagonally across the road from the newsstand and there's a shop which as long as I can remember has displayed saris in the window. Four life-sized models of Indian women, and reams of cloth. On the door a notice announces a forthcoming concert at Wembley Arena: Anand Miland presents Rekha, live, with Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, Jahi Chawla and Raveena Tandon. On another ad, for the end of the month, is written 'All Hindus are cordially invited'. In another newsagents I chat with the man who keeps it, a Muslim unutterably depressed by events in the Gulf, silently chafing at having to sell *The Sun*. Overhead there is always at least one aeroplane – we seem to be on a flight-path to Heathrow and by the time they're over Kilburn you can see them clearly enough to tell the airline and wonder as you struggle with your shopping where they're coming from. Below, the reason the traffic is snarled up (another odd effect of time-space-compression!) is in part because this is one of the main entrances to and escape-routes from London, the road to Staples Corner and the beginning of the M1 to the North.

'If it is now recognised that people have multiple identities then the same point can be made in relation to places'

This is just the beginnings of a sketch from immediate impressions but a proper analysis could be done, of the links between Kilburn and the world. And so it could for almost any place.

Kilburn is a place for which I have a great affection; I have lived there many years. It certainly has 'a character of its own'. But it is possible to feel all this without subscribing to any of the static and defensive – and in that sense reactionary – notions of 'place' which were referred to above. First, while Kilburn may have a character of its own, it is absolutely not a seamless, coherent identity, a single sense of place which everyone shares. It could hardly be less so. People's routes through the place, their favourite haunts within it, the connections they make (physically, or by phone or post, or in memory and imagination) between here and the rest of the world vary enormously. If it is now recognised that people have multiple identities then the same point can be made in relation to places. Moreover, such multiple identities can either be a source of richness or a source of conflict, or both.

One of the problems here has been a persistent identification of place with 'community'. Yet this is a misidentification. On the one hand communities can exist without being in the same place – from networks of friends with like interests, to major religious, ethnic or political communities. On the other hand, the instances of places housing single 'communities' in the sense of coherent social groups are probably – and, I would argue, have for long been – quite rare. Moreover, even where they do exist this in no way implies a single sense of place. For people occupy different positions within any community. We could counterpose to the chaotic mix of Kilburn the relatively stable and homogeneous community (at least in popular imagery) of a small mining village. Homogeneous? 'Communities' too have internal structures. To take the most obvious example, I'm sure a woman's sense of place in a mining village – the spaces through which she normally moves, the meeting places, the connections outside – are different from a man's. Their 'senses of the place' will be different.

Moreover, not only does 'Kilburn', then, have many identities (or its full identity is a complex mix of all these) it is also, looked at in this way, absolutely *not* introverted. It is (or ought to be) impossible even to begin thinking about Kilburn High Road without bringing into play half the world and a considerable amount of British imperialist history (and this certainly goes for mining villages too). Imagining it this way provokes in you (or at least in me) a really global sense of place.

And finally, in contrasting this way of looking at places with the defensive reactionary view, I certainly could not begin to, nor would I want to, define 'Kilburn' by drawing its enclosing boundaries.

So, at this point in the argument, get back in your mind's eye on a satellite; go right out again and look back at the globe. This time, however, imagine not just all the physical movement, nor even all the often invisible communications, but also and especially all the social relations, all the links between people. Fill it in with all those different experiences of time-space-compression. For what is happening is that the geography of social relations is changing. In many cases such relations are increasingly stretched out over space. Economic, political and cultural social relations, each full of power and with internal structures of domination and subordination, stretched out over the planet at every different level, from the household to the local area to the international.

It is from that perspective that it is possible to envisage an alternative interpretation of place. In this interpretation, what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalised history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus. If one moves in from the satellite towards the globe, holding all those networks of social relations and movements and communications in one's head, then each 'place' can be seen as a particular, unique, point of their intersection. It is, indeed, a *meeting* place. Instead then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be a street, or a region or even a continent. And this in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local.

This is not a question of making the ritualistic connections to 'the wider system' – the people in the local meeting who bring up international capitalism every time you try to have a discussion about rubbish-collection – the point is that there are real relations with real content – economic, political, cultural – between any local place and the wider world in which it is set. In economic geography the argument has long been accepted that it is not possible to understand the 'inner city', for instance its loss of jobs, the decline of manufacturing employment there, by looking only at the inner city. Any adequate explanation has to set the inner city in its wider geographical context. Perhaps it is appropriate to think how that kind of understanding could be extended to the

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notion of a sense of place.

These arguments, then, highlight a number of ways in which a progressive concept of place might be developed. First of all, it is absolutely not static. If places can be conceptualised in terms of the social interactions which they tie together, then it is also the case that these interactions themselves are not motionless things, frozen in time. They are processes. One of the great one-liners in marxist exchanges has for long been 'ah, but capital is not a thing, it's a process'. Perhaps this should be said also about places; that places are processes, too.

Second, places do not have to have boundaries in the sense of divisions which frame simple enclosures. 'Boundaries' may of course be necessary, for the purposes of certain types of studies for instance, but they are not necessary for the conceptualisation of a place itself. Definition in this sense does not have to be through simple counterposition to the outside; it can come, in part, precisely through the particularity of linkage *to* that 'outside' which is therefore itself part of what constitutes the place. This helps get away from the common association between penetrability and vulnerability. For it is this kind of association which makes invasion by newcomers so threatening.

Third, clearly places do not have single, unique 'identities'; they are full of internal conflicts. Just think, for instance, about London's Docklands, a place which is at the moment quite clearly *defined* by conflict: a conflict over what its past has been (the nature of its 'heritage'), conflict over what should be its present development, conflict over what could be its future.

Fourth, and finally, none of this denies place nor the importance of the uniqueness of place. The specificity of place is continually reproduced, but it is not a specificity which results from some long, internalised history. There are a number of sources of this specificity – the uniqueness of place.[4] There is the fact that the wider social relations in which places are set are themselves geographically differentiated. Globalisation (in the economy, or in culture, or in anything else) does not entail simply homogenisation. On the contrary, the globalisation of social relations is yet another source of (the reproduction of) geographical uneven development, and thus of the uniqueness of place. There is the specificity of place which derives from the fact that each place is the focus of a distinct *mixture* of wider and more local social relations. There is the fact that this very mixture together in one place may produce effects which would not have happened otherwise. And finally, all these relations interact with and take a further element of specificity from the accumulated history of a place, with that history itself imagined as the product of layer upon layer of different sets of linkages, both local and to the wider world.

'Instead of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations'

In her portrait of Corsica, *Granite Island*, Dorothy Carrington travels the island seeking out the roots of its character.[5] All the different layers of peoples and cultures are explored; the long and tumultuous relationship with France, with Genoa and Aragon in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, back through the much earlier incorporation into the Byzantine Empire, and before that domination by the Vandals, before that being part of the Roman Empire, before that the colonisation and settlements of the Carthaginians and the Greeks... until we find... that even the megalith builders had come to Corsica from somewhere else.

It is a sense of place, an understanding of 'its character', which can only be constructed by linking that place to places beyond. A progressive sense of place would recognise that, without being threatened by it. What we need, it seems to me, is a global sense of the local, a global sense of place.●

1. D Birkett, *New Statesman And Society*, 13 June 1990, pp 41-2.
2. D Birkett, *New Statesman And Society*, 15 March 1991, p 38.
3. P Wright, *On Living In An Old Country*, Verso, 1985.
4. D Massey, *Spatial Divisions Of Labour: Social Structures And The Geography Of Production*, Macmillan, 1984.
5. D Carrington, *Granite Island: A Portrait Of Corsica*, Penguin.

Doreen Massey is the professor of geography at the Open University.

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The Empire Strikes Back

The West Indies are back in town. **Frank Keating** looks back to the era of patronising paternalism, and their first sweet victories over the old 'Mother Country'

David Frith Collection

Another Test match series between England and the West Indians gets under way – and again, no doubt, more than a few Englishmen will be complaining before the summer is out that the West Indians do not have a proper appreciation of the grand old game. In as much as they hit too hard with the bat, and bowl too fast with the ball.

Although the regular challenge between the two sides has only been deemed 'official' by the mandarins of the English game at Lord's for just over 60 years, we are in fact fast approaching a centenary of cricket contests between the Caribbean teams and the 'Mother Country' of the old British Empire.

The first English touring side was led by the redoubtable autocrat, Lord 'I shave twice a day, my professionals only once: a sign we each know our place' Hawke.

For matches in Barbados and Demerara (now Guyana), they declined to play any side which included a non-white in their team. But when they arrived at Port-of-Spain, the more multiracially advanced administration insisted they would have to. Hawke grumbled but, in the end, conceded.

They played two matches there, and Hawke's men lost them both. At which Pelham Warner, scion of a wealthy plantation-owning family, and later knighted for services to cricket, cabled back to England and *Wisden*, even then the cricketers' annual 'bible': 'Chief credit for the notable island victories rested with the two black bowlers, Woods and Cumberbatch, who between them took 39 wickets in the two matches. Woods bowled very fast with a somewhat low and slinging action. He is very straight and every now and then breaks back considerably. Cumberbatch, who is probably the better bowler of the two, is a medium fast right-hander. He breaks both ways and varies his speed with much judgement.' As I say, since then, through the whole century, there has been nothing new under the cricket suns of summer.

Warner also added in his notes for that *Wisden* of 1898: 'The fielding of the Trinidad team was splendid. Black men are especially fine fielders: they throw well and seldom miss a catch.' I suppose he felt it superfluous to explain that the black men, at least in the Trinidad team on those two days, had all been mighty well practised in the fielding arts by regular and compulsory fielding at games played by the garrison officers of the British army stationed in Trinidad, or by the sons of the well-to-do plantation owners – games in which, it goes without saying, native sons of the soil were not allowed an innings or a turn of the ball themselves.

Still, that first mention in *Wisden* of island cricket being taken seriously showed, in the face of the prevailing colonial certainties of the time, a surprising lack of patronising paternalism on the part of Warner; and, indeed, it spelt out an enlightened prophecy of what was to come.

But patronising paternalism had a long course to run yet. Oh dear me, it did. Three years after that first tour by Hawke's men, Pelham Warner's older brother, RSA Aucher Warner, brought the first 'unofficial' (as Lord's called it) collective and multiracial team across to England. It was made up of players from Trinidad, Barbados, and British Guiana. On the day they disembarked at Southampton from the banana boat, the London *Evening Star* carried a large cartoon featuring Dr WG Grace, the English cricket champion, in a towering, regal pose, bat in hand instead of scimitar, while around him cowered and simpered seven or eight black men, all shedding tears and imploring the doctor, 'sorry, sah, we have only come to learn, sah'.

The team played a number of county sides, but did not do themselves justice. Of 17 games, they lost eight and drew four. Another London paper of the time, *The Sun*, summed up: 'They field fairly well, but their bowling is weak and their batting crude and possessing little style. None of them seems to have any idea of forward play and there is little variety in their strokes. Few of them score freely on the offside, but one and all are good at the old-fashioned leg-stroke, and they time the ball admirably.'

The writer, alas, offered not a jot of allowance for the pitches – or the climate – that these cricketing tyros had been born to, back home on their islands. For the batsmen, playing forward was unwise due to the unrolled, hard, uneven, sunbaked wickets, for a start. And as for the poor bowlers, well, some of them were having to bowl in boots for the first time. Warner Sr and Lord's kitted them out with cast-offs for foot-wear. Must keep up appearances, what! In the early match, against Gloucestershire at Bristol on June 28 1900, the same Woods who had so impressed Warner Jr three years ago in Trinidad, marked up his run in boots for the first time. Two whacking great cornish-pasty-like things at the end of his legs. It must have been, to him, like running in concrete. Gloucester's crouching demon of a hitter, Gilbert Jessop, sprang at poor Woods mercilessly, flailing an astonishing 157 in just over an hour.

Early on in the assault, Woods approached his white-man captain at mid-off – 'Please, Mr Warner, sir, I have only ever bowled if I can feel the pitch with my toes. May I take my boots off – even for just one over, sir, then I am sure I can get this man out?' 'Certainly not, my good man. This is England. You are playing cricket against a first-class county, sir!'

Poor Woods. I always think fondly of his memory. And every time, these last few decades of the century, when I've witnessed an English batsman hopping and ducking and diving away from rearing, devilishly fast balls, delivered by

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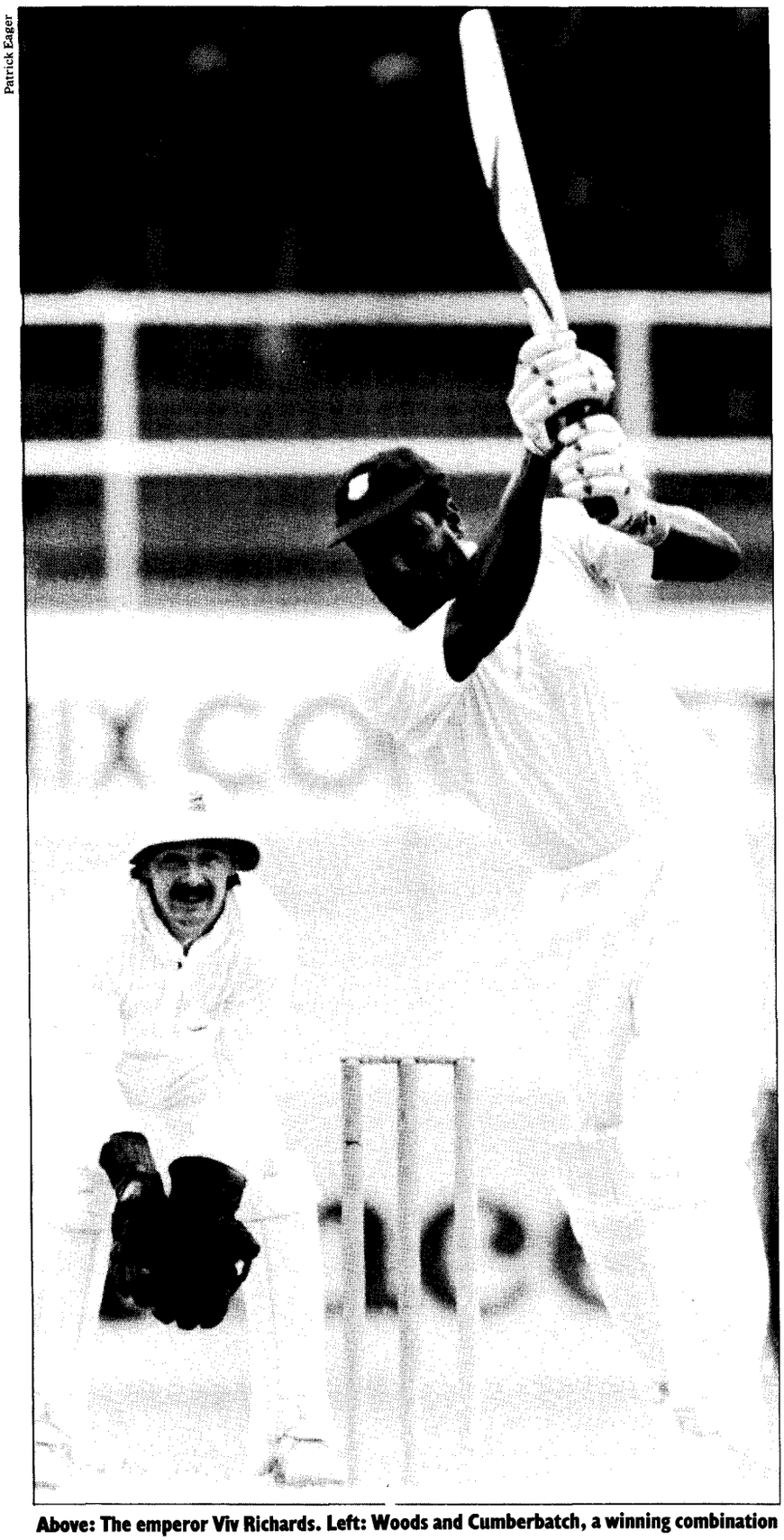

Patrick Eager

Above: The emperor Viv Richards. Left: Woods and Cumberbatch, a winning combination

his heirs in any West Indies new-ball attack, I fancy that Woods is looking down contentedly, and with vindication.

But that team of heroes and pioneers began a regular, two-way traffic of cricket tours across the Atlantic. In 1901 an Oxbridge side played a dozen games around the islands; in 1905 Lord Brackley's XI played a 'Test' against 'the All-West-Indies XI'; a year later another West Indies side toured England.

Each match, each Englishman's wicket taken or English bowler's delivery dispatched through the covers or to the midwicket boundary was another firmly struck pin in the edifice of self-esteem of a people hitherto wretchedly submerged in slavery and degradation. As the great Trinidadian writer, VS Naipaul, had it in *The Middle Passage*: 'In a society which demanded no skills and offered no rewards to merit, cricket was the only activity which permitted a man to grow to his full stature and to be measured against international standards. Alone on a field, beyond obscuring intrigue, the cricketer's true worth could be seen by all. His race, education, wealth did not matter. We had no scientists, engineers, explorers, soldiers or poets. The cricketer was our only hero figure. And that is why cricket is played in the West Indies with such panache.'

And so it came to pass. Four years after the first world war, and a quarter of a century after the racist snub of Lord Hawke's first tour of the Caribbean, a full West Indies team – still 'unofficial' and, as they would be till the 1960s and Sir Frank Worrell, still captained as a matter of course by a white man – made their way round England on another tour. Three black cricketers made up a luminous trio in the side which hugely impressed the English shires: the two George's, John and Francis, who bowled with cunning and speed, and a 22 year-old all-rounder of blazing opulence, Learie Constantine.

'Alone on a field, beyond obscuring intrigue, the cricketer's true worth could be seen by all'

The glorious resplendence of Constantine's cricket was the prophecy which foretold the coming of such legendary giants to the whole world game as George Headley, 'the black Bradman', the 'Three W's' – Everton Weekes, Clyde Walcott, and Worrell – the 'onliest' Sir Garfield Sobers, Clive Lloyd, and the merciless emperor himself, Vivian Richards. And there followed a whole stream of bowlers – mystical wizards like Sonny Ramadhin, Alf Valentine, and Lance Gibbs, and fiercesome heirs to Woods and John (who, according to CLR James, Trinidad and the world's grand poet, philosopher, and marxist, 'began the thing by striking many a batsman on the pads, to fell him like an ox'), and on to such a litany of new-ball saints as Martindale, Gilchrist, Hall, Griffith, Holding, Roberts, Croft, Garner 'the Big Bird', and Marshall 'the Macho Man'. Plus many more superlative bowlers from whence they came.

And Constantine, of course, was not only founder of the feast at cricket. He went on to become a QC at London's Middle Temple, a governor of the BBC, rector of St Andrews, a cabinet minister in Trinidad, and the first Baron Constantine of Nelson and Maraval – the first black peer in all history to sit in the House of Lords of the United Kingdom and Her Majesty's Commonwealth of Nations. There's a 'V-sign' for you, relishingly given on behalf of old Woods, of the cornish-pasty boots at Bristol all those years ago. In that time cricket has triumphantly filled a gap in the West Indies' consciousness and needs. But also in Britain's, did we but admit it.

Tell you what, it is mighty good to have them back among us, *The Champions*.●

Frank Keating is sports writer for The Guardian and The Spectator.

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No Marks For Education

Many on the Right contend there is too much of the state in our education system. **Andy Green** argues there is not enough – and never has been

'We have a bloody state system I wish we hadn't got. I wish we'd taken a different route in 1870. We got the ruddy state involved. I don't want it. I don't think we know how to do it. I certainly don't think secretaries of state know anything about it. But we're landed with it.' (Keith Joseph)[1]

The proper role of the state in British education is more contested now than at any time since the 1860s. For over a century it was generally accepted that in a democratic society universal education could be properly delivered only by a national system funded and managed by the state. Education was a collective social need and civic right and as such could not be left to private and local interests. It had to be a public service vouchsafed by the state. At least that was the theory.

This consensus no longer exists in British politics. Since 1979 Conservative governments have declared themselves profoundly uneasy with the whole concept of state maintained education. Former secretary of state, Keith Joseph, in a recent interview with Stephen Ball, went so far as to claim that secretaries of state knew nothing about education – a truly astonishing admission from someone once entrusted with the education of the nation's children, but very revealing of a certain mentality. He went on to lament that Britain had ever developed a state education system and assured that if he had been around in 1870 he would have taken a different route. Many of the most powerful political voices in education today still want to take that other route – one that would lead to educational vouchers and a free-market in education – in other words to the end of state education as we know it. Several of the measures in the 1988 Education Act have taken us some way down that road already.

This is the clear agenda of the so-called new Right, which has provided some of the dominant political discourses of the last 12 years, not least in education. The thinking of the free-marketers in education, as elsewhere, is now quite familiar. Their critique of state education is that it is a bureaucratic and inefficient state monopoly dominated by producer interests and unresponsive to the demands of its consumers, the parents and employers. Most of the problems in education, they maintain, can be attributed to the meddling of misguided administrators and self-interested teachers, to misconceived policies of social engineering through comprehensive schools and to so-called progressive teaching methods. 'The present parlous state of state maintained education', wrote Stuart Sexton in 1987, 'is not the result of six years of Conservative government, it is the result of 30 years or more of successive government attempts to run education as a government managed service'.[2]

Seen from a comparative or historical point of view, the claim that what ails British education is an overdose of state management seems rather bizarre. In the first place British education is very much less 'managed' by the state than is the case in most other countries, including many, like France, Germany, Japan and Sweden, which are generally considered to have rather better records in terms of educational participation and levels of achievement in a broad range of subjects. The education system in England and Wales has traditionally been regarded as peculiarly decentralised. Legislation has typically been permissive not prescriptive; there has been no national curriculum until recently, and considerable responsibility has been devolved to individual institutions and their teachers. This may now be changing but it was certainly the case during most of the postwar period vilified by Stuart Sexton. Compared with most continental systems its main peculiarity has been its singular lack of central state management. Nor has any other European state sought to introduce the kind of free-market measures advocated here.

You will look in vain in France, Germany, Austria or Sweden for any equivalent of educational vouchers, local management of schools, open enrolment, or other policies designed to stimulate free-market competition between schools. The educational free-market is largely a home-grown invention.

The second point is that on a longer historical evaluation many of the educational problems attributed to the postwar era, and to the politics of social democracy, can, in fact, be traced much further back to the liberal politics of the last century. Indeed, it is arguable that the peculiar underdevelopment of various aspects of UK education and training derive in no small part from the legacy of the laissez-faire policies of the 19th century which were never quite superceded in the era of the welfare state. On this reckoning, the very solutions offered by the neo-liberal Right are in reality part of the longer, and peculiarly English, historical problem.

England was the last major country to create a national education system and the most reluctant to put it under state control. Many continental states, including France, Switzerland, Holland and the German states, had developed their state systems by 1850. These included networks of elementary schools, administered and largely funded by the state, providing near-universal and sometimes compulsory education, in the case of Prussia up to 14 years of age; significant, though less widespread, networks of state secondary and trade schools; fully-fledged central educational bureaucracies responsible, among other things, for setting curricula and inspecting schools; and national systems of teacher training and state examinations. By the mid-19th century, England had few vestiges of a state system and its church schools enrolled scarcely more than half of the children of school age. The foundations of a public system were not laid until the 1870 act created the local board schools to supplement the existing voluntary system. A unified educational bureaucracy was not created until 1899, and state secondary schools did not emerge until 1902, one hundred years after Napoleon created the *lycées*. Compulsory education until 14 was not legislated until 1918, 90 years after similar legislation was put on the Prussian statute books.

The reasons behind the differential development of national systems in 19th century states are complex. The educational advance of some continental states no doubt had something to do with the deliberate state-building policies of the 18th century absolutist monarchies and dirigiste regimes of the post-revolutionary era. Military ambition and the desire to escape economic underdevelopment frequently gave stimulus to educational development. Schools were designed to provide loyal military recruits, experts for the state bureaucracies, and engineers to promote industrial development and civic works. Education was an important vehicle for generating the cultural and linguistic cohesion required by the developing nation states, and an effective conduit for the ideologies which would underpin the political hegemony of the rising

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bourgeois class.

Britain, an island which had long since achieved national unification, had less need to use education as a means of nation-building. However, surpassing all other reasons for England's slow educational development was the pervasive liberal hostility to the state. The dominant creed of 19th-century liberalism was self-help and economic individualism. Laissez-faire politics regarded the state as a necessary evil for ensuring the protection of property, civil order and the defence of the realm, but its role in other matters was to be kept to the minimum.

Laissez-faire liberalism and the absence of what Marquand has called the 'developmental state' thus, more than anything else, delayed the development of a national education system in England. Instead of concerted educational development through the state we had a fragmented voluntary system, relying almost solely on the efforts of charitable organisations, and receiving little organised support from the state. The churches and the voluntary societies were the mainspring of educational development throughout most of the century. Through the early monitorial schools, a cheap and easily reproducible form of school organisation, they achieved a considerable expansion of elementary schooling but it remained uneven and nothing to match the advance of state schooling in countries like Prussia. Elementary education remained of short duration and exceedingly narrow, especially after the introduction of Robert Lowe's infamous 'payment by results' system of funding. Secondary schooling was more elitist than anywhere else in northern Europe and remained dominated by the classical culture favoured by the landed class; a meritocratic and utilitarian education thrived briefly with the dissenting academies and then died leaving no provision designed for middle-class needs. State trade schools, along French and German lines, never caught on: technical training was largely limited to the apprentice system and thus remained normatively anti-theoretical, low status and marginalised from mainstream education. By 1884 the Samuelson commission was still forced to conclude that 'the one point in which Germany is overwhelmingly superior to England is in schools, and in the education of all classes of the people. The dense ignorance so common amongst workmen in England is unknown'.[3]

By the 1860s the situation did begin to change, and thereafter a national system was gradually forged. It had at last become apparent that the voluntary system could not work and that education was too important and large an undertaking to be left to individual and local initiative. However, the public education system which finally emerged was never more than a compromise with the voluntary system. State elementary and later state secondary schools were developed but the voluntary system still remained a predominant force. Private secondary schools were allowed to retain their privileges and an exceptional degree of autonomy; likewise the universities and the private examining bodies. Church schools were incorporated after 1902 but with a large measure of independence intact. The national system which finally emerged was a public system but one in which private interests retained exceptional levels of power. The whole was fragmented and unco-ordinated, less a system than an accretion of separate parts none of which wished to loose its independence. The Bryce commission celebrated the English educational tradition for its 'freedom, variety and elasticity', but frequently in practice elasticity has meant ad hoc and unplanned development; variety has meant class differentiation; and freedom has meant the unchecked license of the powerful to provide education solely in their own interests.

'The national system which emerged was a public system but one in which private interests retained execptional levels of power'

During the era of the welfare state England and Wales has had a state education system whose broad outlines are similar to those in other countries. However, in at least three crucial respects it has remained distinctive, not to say peculiarly underdeveloped: the private sector and private interests in education have remained exceptionally powerful, decisively undercutting any public commitment to collective provision; the state system has remained in many ways unregulated and unplanned; and technical education has continued to be marginalised from mainstream education, suffering from underfunding and low esteem.

All western countries have systems of private schools but in no other country do they have the enormous prestige, independence and influence that ours enjoy. Private schools in France and the US are more numerous than ours but they exist in the main to satisfy religious minorities. In Germany the private and church schools were long ago brought under the aegis of the state. The English 'public schools' are unique in the hold they retain over positions of power and influence and in the damage they do to the state sector by divesting the ruling class from a sense of responsibility to the state sector which it rarely uses. However, the stranglehold of private interests does not stop with the elite secondary schools. Universities, private exam boards and the churches, which own a third of the nation's schools, also have a level of independence and power with no parallel in other countries.

The corollary of a uniquely powerful private sector is an underdeveloped public sector. The undervaluing of state education is hard to pin down but it is a pervasive trait in this country. It can be measured in the low proportion of GDP devoted to state education; in the rapidity with which government ministers fly in and out of the 'revolving door' at the DES, regarding it as little more than a staging post to higher things; in the generally low status accorded to teachers in the state sector; in the fact that few present government cabinet ministers will entrust their children to state schools, and in the often low expectations that society has in terms of what the majority of children might achieve in education. Our individualist culture has never quite come to terms with public education and it is no historical accident that the last major state to create a state system is now set to be the first to abolish it.

Far from being 'over-managed', education in England and Wales has always been hopelessly under-managed, sometimes by civil servants and politicians who knew little about it and couldn't care less. Balfour once said education was such a boring issue that he couldn't be bothered with it and I suspect that many subsequent ministers have felt the same, except where it concerned their *alma mater*. At a more structural level, the administration of our system has been distinguished by two unique characteristics: it has been subject to relatively little legislative control and a great deal of power has been devolved to local authorities and to heads and teachers.

Much of our educational legislation in the past century has been permissive rather than prescriptive: that is to say the law empowered responsible bodies to take certain courses of action but has not enforced them to do so or often not given them the wherewithal to do so. The trouble with permissive legislation is that the responsible authorities do not always take action or, if they do, they often do different things, which leads to much confusion and muddle.

Decentralising control over the management of schools has also been typical and is equally double-edged. It may lead to creative local innovation and responsiveness to local need, but it can also lead to unevenness, complacency and lack of overall strategic direction in education. It might seem that given the attitude of the ruling elites to state education it is just as well that they have delegated its management to others and I do not doubt that there are some features of our decentralised system which have been valuable and which are worth preserving. But there have also been costs. Two in particular come to mind.

Firstly, it has led to a disastrous lack of structural organisation and coherence. Each local authority has organised its schools in different ways in the UK and some even have different structures in different areas of their own authority. When LEAs were asked to go comprehensive in the mid-60s, for instance, some adopted all-through secondary schools models, some middle school systems, some community school models, and some refused to go comprehensive altogether. In the post-16 sector we now have a jungle of different institutions with overlapping provision

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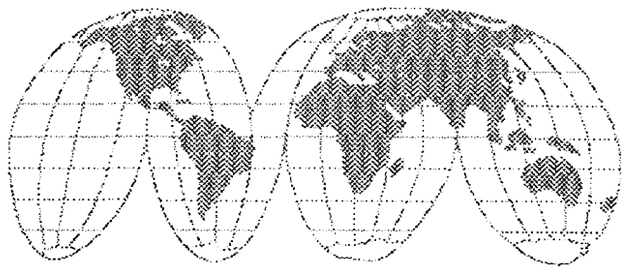

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including school sixth-forms (state and private), further education, tertiary and sixth-form colleges, and private training agencies. Institutional diversity has been mirrored by the byzantine complexity of the qualification system, with over 300 private awarding bodies offering thousands of different certificates. These are frequently designed to be mutually incompatible and the resulting lack of transparency and progression routes in the system are major factors limiting access and retention.

Secondly, the absence of any national or common curriculum for most of our history has further robbed the state system of direction and coherence. It has meant that children have received a very uneven experience of education in different schools and different areas and this has decisively undercut the egalitarian thrust of comprehensive schooling. I am not in favour of national curricula laid down to the last detail and taking no account of teachers' judgements or of the differential cultures and needs of students. But a degree of uniformity in the broad outlines and aims of the curriculum is essential if children are to have equal opportunities in education. In the absence of this we have not developed the normative expectations of schooling for all children which in some other countries have underpinned the comprehensive concept of high aspirations and entitlement for all.

The Education Reform Act has broken with this historical legacy but only superficially so. Much to the disgust of free-market radicals like Joseph and Sexton, it did introduce a quasi-national curriculum which, whatever one thinks of the specific content, was a move in the right direction, although it is now beginning to unravel. But this apparent centralisation was, for the Thatcherites if not for the DES, only a means for further reducing the role of the state, and particularly the local state, in education. The 'strong state' was to be midwife of the free-market, where LMS, open enrolment, and 'opting-out' would act as the catalysts for educational competition. Since the act, the process has continued. Opt-out schools have been freed to change their status, thus fulfilling Brian Simon's prediction in this journal that they would lead to a return to selection by the back door; training has been handed over to employer-led Training and Enterprise Councils, an astonishing triumph of ideology over experience, given the employers' poor historical record in the area; and colleges are to be removed from LEA control and turned into corporations directly financed by a central funding council. This will generate free-for-all competition between different post-16 providers, severing the links between sixth-forms and further education, blocking the successful tertiary movement, and making any planned reorganisation of the sector impossible. While many influential bodies (like the CBI, RSA, and the IPPR) are rightly calling for greater integration of post-16 education and training, the government has preferred to sacrifice rational organisation to free enterprise.

'It is no historical accident that the last major state to create a state system is now set to be the first to abolish it'

If the lessons of the past are any guide, this return to laissez-faire policies will serve education and training very badly. A better alternative, and one suggested by some of the more educationally successful continental countries, would be to acknowledge the overriding national importance of collective provision in an effective public education service, and to set about constructing the coherent national system we never had. This would mean developing a systematic and inclusive national framework for institutions, curricula and assessment, where the different social partners would play their important parts but within a system led by the elected representatives, not dominated by private interests. The Conservative government has greatly increased central government powers in education. A future Labour government should not be afraid to use them.●

Andy Green is a lecturer at the Institute of Education.

1. Quoted in Stephen J Ball, *Politics And Policy-Making In Education*, Routledge, 1990.
2. Stuart Sexton, *Our Schools, A Radical Policy*, Institute of Economic Affairs, 1987.
3. Report of the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction, 1884.

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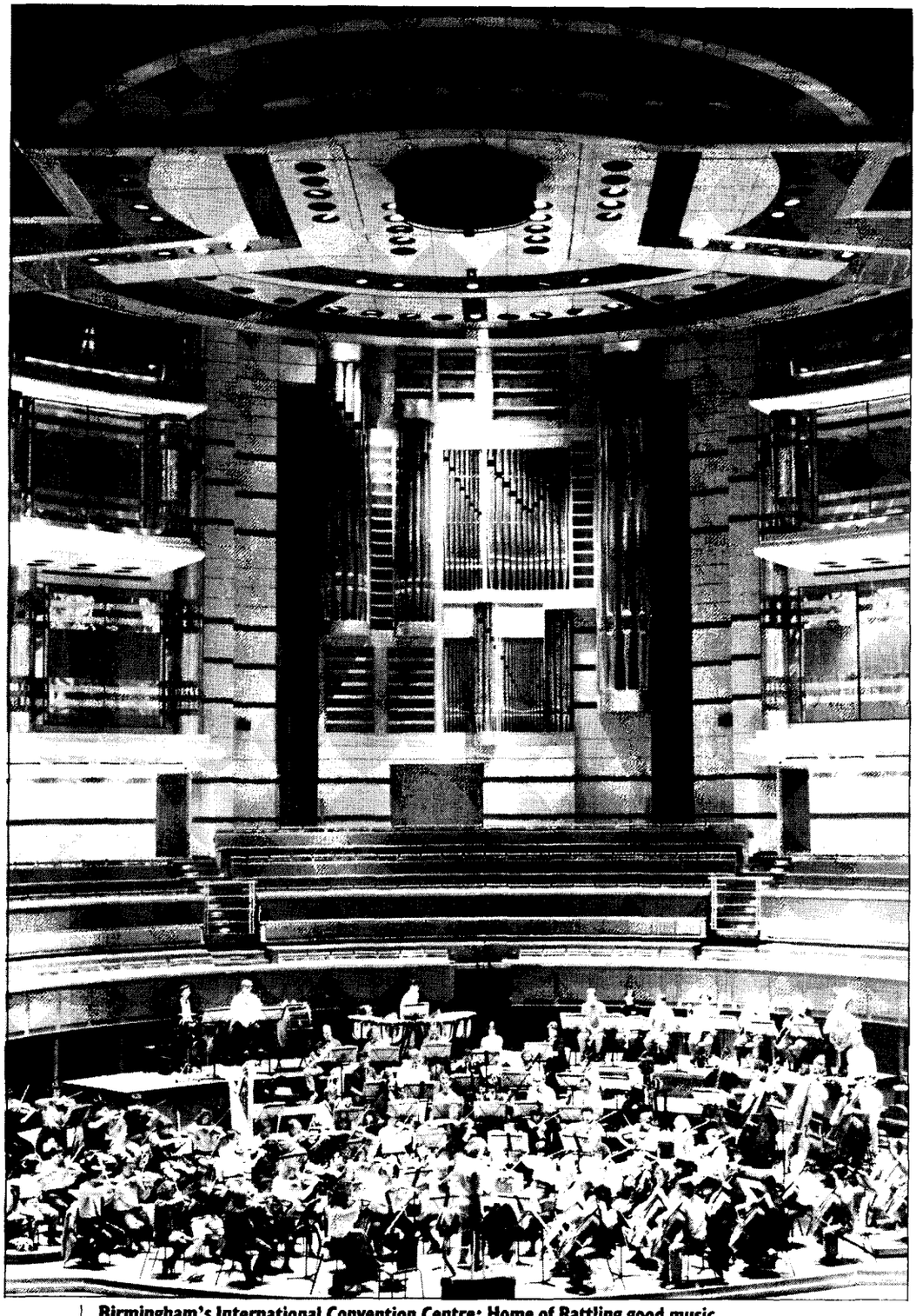
Alternative Cities

Franco Bianchini on the attempts to construct new cosmopolitan images of Britain's regional capitals



Birmingham's International Convention Centre: Home of Rattling good music

In 80s Britain, one of the key features of municipal entrepreneurialism was the notion of the city as an economic entity. The belief was that, in order to adapt to structural economic change, the external images of cities could, and indeed should, be constructed and marketed like those of any consumer product. By the mid-80s, the need for many cities to respond to the decline of the manufacturing industry, to find new economic roles and to attract footloose international capital, developers and tourists, had brought about the emergence of aggressive strategies to market themselves as 'places'.

These campaigns were quite different from those pioneered by the GLC earlier in the decade ('Working For London', do you remember?) through which local authorities had tried both to promote an image of serving and caring for their population, and (implicitly) to protect local autonomy against Thatcherite policies of centralisation.

In cities like Glasgow, Newcastle, Bradford, Sheffield and Birmingham, 'city marketing' was driven mainly by economic imperatives. Policy makers consciously attempted to shed negative images of economic decline, environmental decay, and related social phenomena – for instance, in the case of Glasgow, drunkenness and razor-gang street violence. A classic theme in such attempts to reverse civic fortunes, was the emphasis on the superior 'quality of life' competing cities could offer.

Cultural amenities and resources are an important component of this nebulous concept, partly because the cultural enlivening of a city can act as a powerful symbol of regeneration, of renewed energy and confidence. Culture has therefore been mobilised to the marketing cause by local authorities, alone or in co-operation with urban development corporations and chambers of commerce.

In Glasgow the key year was 1983, with the opening of the Burrell Collection and

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the launch of Mayfest, the first building block of an annual programme of arts festivals. Both events provided some evidence to support the claims made by the 'Glasgow's Miles Better' advertising campaign, and helped create the conditions for the 1990 'European City of Culture' nomination.

The award was trumpeted as the clearest proof of the city's renaissance, while the 'European' theme became an important marketing tool. A brochure produced by the Greater Glasgow Tourist Board for the 1990 celebrations declared that 'Glasgow doesn't really feel like a British city... Glasgow looks like a European city. And feels like one'.

The brochure listed among the qualities that made Glasgow 'a great European city becoming even greater' the atmosphere of the recently opened Princes Square shopping centre ('an air of opulence reminiscent of La Galleria in Milan'), in addition to more abstract, city-wide attributes like 'rich culture' and 'style'.

This summer finds Birmingham and Sheffield at the centre of attention. The former for the recent opening of its International Convention Centre (ICC) and Symphony Hall, the latter for the World Student Games, to be held in the city from July 14-25. In both cities the emphasis on new cultural attractions and infrastructures emerged from the need to compensate for the rapid decline of the traditional manufacturing industry. An attractive ambience and a lively cultural scene were seen in both cases as key requirements in finding new economic functions in such sectors as advanced services, media, tourism, and hi-tech industry.

Birmingham launched new festivals (of jazz, literature, cinema and tv), attracted prestigious arts organisations (including the D'Oyly Carte opera company and Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet, renamed Birmingham Royal Ballet), established a media development agency within an especially designated 'Media Quarter', and is successfully using the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, led by Simon Rattle, as its ambassador worldwide.

Sheffield, for its part, restored its Lyceum Theatre, and created a 'Cultural Industries Quarter' encompassing a municipally-owned cinema, an arts centre/nightclub, municipal recording studios and rehearsal rooms, a photographic gallery, a developing 'Audio-Visual Enterprise Centre', and a sprinkling of small businesses mainly related to music, film and tv production. However, perhaps because of financial and organisational difficulties, the cultural festival to be held within the World Student Games is strangely not focusing on youth culture, which appears to be the key strength Sheffield could exploit in image terms.

Lastly, both Birmingham and Sheffield developed public art strategies to 'beautify' their environments. In Birmingham in particular, the need to 'humanise' the city-centre, after a series of postwar planning disasters, was perceived by local decision-makers as one of the main problems to be tackled. An investment of over £800,000 in decorative art and sculpture in the ICC area was combined with cultural animation initiatives aimed at making the city-centre more pedestrian-friendly. In an effort to become more lively at night, the city is also openly discussing how to reform its traditionally stringent licensing laws, with a 'Birmingham: dead or alive?' debate in which local youth and the business/tourism lobby are allied in favour of liberalisation.

The cities which have been relatively successful at marketing themselves have often done so in the name of celebrating the uniqueness of local cultures and identities. Yet these strategies tend to adopt broadly similar images and metaphors, are often based upon similar 'flagship projects' (convention centres, concert halls,

A sporting chance: Sheffield's World Student Games facilities

glitzy indoor shopping malls, marinas, prestigious office buildings and residential complexes), and prioritise similar target audiences: financial investors, developers, managers, technologists and other skilled personnel.

Seen in this light, the new art of marketing cities could be interpreted as merely an aspect of a wider process of cultural standardisation, primarily driven by the need for old industrial cities to repackage and reposition themselves according to the global economy, often by 'normalising' their public image.

It is partly because of the social costs of such urban restructuring that 'heritage' themes are so very popular in the attempts to market new images of cities. The appeal to shared roots and to the allegedly 'organic' communities of the past is a way to soften the traumatic consequences of a city's search for a new identity, and growing social polarization.

Although in some cases campaigns produce a revival of local pride and interest in the locality, they are never primarily aimed at fostering the 'rediscovery' of a city by its residents. Instead marketing strategies are generally conceived and implemented by small groups of professional strategists and image-makers. They are not legitimized through genuine public consultation, and the emphasis is very often on the 'exclusiveness' of particular, customised urban environments, and very rarely on the enjoyment of the city as an organic whole.

For all these reasons, last summer's seemingly parochial debate about the 'Elspeth King affair' in Glasgow is important. Elspeth King, the distinguished curator of Glasgow's People's Palace since 1974, was effectively forced by Glasgow district council to apply for her own job, when a new post of keeper of social history was created. Given her achievements in 16 years at the Palace, many assumed the job would be hers as of right.

The council decided instead to appoint Mark O'Neill, the curator of Glasgow's Springburn Museum. The substance of the ensuing debate – which occupied much space in the Scottish press – can be summarised with a quote from an article by one of King's supporters, Michael Donnelly, who was also her deputy at the People's Palace: 'The wish locally to bury the facts of a past which had become inconvenient, and to superimpose a new, sanitised, marketable image of the city required not a critical social history rooted in the verities of our existence, but a bland, self-congratulatory hype, which found its true apotheosis in the insultingly patronising "Mr Happy" of "Glasgow's Miles Better." '

Without wishing to take

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sides in this controversy, one can only hope that it will help shift city marketing into the arena of local politics and political debate. The civic agenda for the 90s includes issues which are too important to be left to narrow groups of professionals.

There is a need to rethink the contribution of minority cultures – political and racial – in shaping the city's public image. The different perceptions of a city's image and identity, in different contexts – local, regional, national, European and global – must also be taken into account. For instance, there is a need for much more sophisticated information about perceptions of cities by decision and opinion-makers in key places in Europe and the rest of the world. At the moment the main indicator on which marketers base their interventions and evaluate their success is the perspective of business executives and investors based in London and the south east.

Finally, there is the important question of whether it is possible for cities to choose strategies of co-operation and complementarity rather than competition and differentiation. For example, why are the co-ordinators of Manchester's Olympics bid not thinking of using some of the excellent sports facilities Sheffield has built for the World Student Games? Or, more generally, how could 'provincial' cities co-operate to counter-balance London's continuing economic and cultural hegemony, and leapfrog the capital by forming linkages and networks involving their counterparts in other European countries?

The success of Glasgow and Birmingham in this respect is encouraging. With post-GLC London paralysed by traffic congestion, administrative fragmentation and a lack of imaginative urban leadership, these cities have challenged the capital's monopoly of cultural excellence and innovation, especially in the 'pre-electronic' arts (in classical music, for example). They are, far more than London, active exploiters of EC resources and active members of international urban networks (like 'Eurocities', in Birmingham's case), and are also keen to initiate projects which would further improve their ambience internationally.

Some of these strategies of regeneration – the attempt to create an attractive environment, to construct a more cosmopolitan image, as well as appealing to investors and visitors from other regions – cannot be denied. But the challenge for the next decade will be to go beyond narrowly consumption-oriented strategies, and the ultimately destructive 80s zero-sum-game of competing for limited pools of inward investment or tourism revenues. It will be necessary to develop more locally-controlled production systems, be they in the manufacturing sector or in cultural industries like film, fashion and design.

City marketing should be a celebration of local production – independent film in Sheffield or popular music in Liverpool and Manchester – and not only of imported culture. Trade exhibitions of both 'old' and 'new' local manufacturing products and processes (including advanced technology and art/industry links) could be a legitimate part of future programmes of urban cultural animation.

Moreover, cities should be more imaginative in the 'quality of life' messages they seek to transmit. It is possible to envisage the establishment of 'green' flagship projects, to embody and communicate a city's concern for the environment, or a 'black' flagship – for instance a centre of excellence for black arts – in a city shaped by the growing social, economic and cultural presence of racial minorities.

This kind of intervention, based on the skills of local residents, should be able to generate wealth and employment locally, to give a genuine, modern meaning to a city's identity and external image, and to revitalise a public sphere in which debate about the future of the city itself can take place.●

Nicole Ward Jouve on the drama of family snaps

The Magic Box

Notre Dame de la Garde. The golden statue at the top of the steeple towers over the white church on top of the highest hill in Marseilles. She holds her child in her arms. Looks out to sea.

You enter the upper church. A myriad candles. A hushed flicker at the altars of the side chapels. The walls are covered with a myriad colourful little pictures. Our lady appears in the sky, saves a family from an overturned coach, a burning house. She saves a child from a fever, sailors from sinking ships. *Ex votos*, my brother the photographer said. They're all over the country churches, all over the churches of the Catholic Latin countries. 'They're the paintings of the poor. For the poor. Ordinary people who couldn't afford the expensive painters, wouldn't have dreamt of having their own portraits painted. Yet if they were saved from the extremity of distress, they would get somebody local to do them, so they could give thanks to the protective Good Mother. *Ex votos* are the only images of poor families to have existed before photography. The only expression of the right of the poor to their own image.'

Photography seems to have provided even the poor with some right to their own image at a surprisingly early date. The 1890s, the first age of tourism for the masses and of the bicycle craze, were the years in which Kodak and Eastman developed their inventions and in which the idea of domestic photography spread, Don Slater tells us in the collection **Family Snaps: The Meaning Of Domestic Photography** (*Virago, pbk* £14.99), edited by Jo Spence and Patricia Holland.

As photography's popularity increased, Terry Dennett shows, the social album became an organ of agitation and propaganda. Cheap photo-postcard production enabled various trade-union and labour organizations to raise funds, to illustrate and record working-class life and struggles both in Ger-

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many and Great Britain. And yet... 'It's only me', working-class women round whose photographs Jo Stanley organised her exhibitions tell her. They don't believe in their right to their own image, especially at work, whether at home or in the factory. The lack of visibility is an index of oppression. Surprising how little things have changed.

In a study of the production of the female body over the last three centuries Philippe Perrot argues that the contemporary ideal of a perfectly smooth, young, suntanned beach nakedness is as despotic in its way as corsets and stays once were. Much of this book makes a similar point about the ideological despotism of the family album: the consuming family, the family who takes snapshots of itself at play, birthdays, weddings, in its leisure time, is the right family. Never mind work, never mind crises, which the *ex votos* had the immense merit of negotiating and sublimating.

The Holy Family might have been a means of oppression: at least it acknowledged the pain in life, it suggested a beyond. The snapshots, the family videos, are meant to produce and deliver happiness. I sell you a camera, plenty of film: you buying domestic bliss. Family bliss, indeed, is your duty. Failing to achieve it, you must at least be seen to be having it. Yourself included.

Much of this wonderfully diverse, astute and brave book is given over to demystifications of familial ideologies. The 28 essayists/photographers struggle to free collective or individual selves from the structures in which they are entrapped. Some show how elaborate the narratives of the family albums are. Others travel up and down memory lane, question their childhood photographs, looking behind the lies, the parental legends, seeking for the source of their homosexuality, their greed or envy. They use photography as therapy, to get closer to the more fluid or real self that has been gelidified or inverted by the magic box.

The range of political approaches is remarkable. This is a rainbow coalition, where racism, colonialism, the clash between cultures, sexual or social oppression and their internalisation are in turns questioned and exposed. Jo Spence and Rosy Martin finely explore how a social-climbing daughter can be made ashamed of her working-class mother, and the long road to travel before the negative mother image and the childhood traumas have been recognized and countered. Nigerian Adeola Solanke confronts her alternating and competing identities through photographs of her two grandfathers: the one in European suit, looking like an 'uncomfortably coiled spring', evidencing (in his grandness and impatience) the 'wider social upheavals and schisms introduced by imperialism'; the other, in traditional outfit, feet firmly planted in the ground, looking 'calm and unfussy', everything about him saying 'This is me'.

The essay is in fine counterpoint to Stuart Hall's analyses of the codes of respectability and respect that emanate from the photographs of the post-1950s Caribbean immigrants to Britain. Not that the two are contradictory: Hall argues that post-Victorian colonial Jamaica was locked into the same 'symbolic and representational frames' as post-Victorian colonising Britain. Still, there is something about the elegance and jauntiness, the cocked boaters and 'innocence' of the photographs of Jamaican immigrants that he discusses, which is very different from the glowering energy of Solanke's grandfather in a European suit. Different cultures? Different attitudes to colonisations? Also perhaps, different versions of the self.

Essentially, this book seeks for authenticity. Beyond mystifications. In the face of death: the moving coda is by Barbara Rosenblum. Suffering from terminal cancer, she gamely challenges a

prospective photograper to record her final three months. Yet hovering over the Hall, the photographs of Indians from the Andes, photographing themselves, which Wendy Ewald discusses, and some of the therapy photographs, is the notion that there can be creativity in acting. In costume, posture, make-believe. The self as actor. Photography as theatre.

Family snaps. The quest for childhood or for a tribal history: the temptation is irresistible. And so picture a house on a hill, in a village near Marseille, many years ago. An old man lives in two dark rooms. He works by the light of the entrance door, a cloth screen only protecting him from the outside. People from the town bring to him the snapsots taken by street photograpers on the Canabiere, the avenue that leads to the port.

Monsieur Duvivier – for that is the man's name – enlarges the photographs in his back room, erasing surroundings, the street, the shops, the cinemas, the crowd, and retaining only one child, or a family group. He then works by his door. He has pastels of all colours, he surrounds the child, the family, with a lovely blue and cloudy sky, grass, flowering bushes. The tips of the fingers on his right hand are calloused. He uses them to smudge the colours, shade blue or green.

The tip of the little finger of the left hand adds the finer final touches, the heart of roses, the blush on the cheeks or mouth. Mesmerised children hang by the cloth screen, their noses barely reaching above it. The ultimate thrill is the final shading, the blush, the hearts of roses.

'A little powder of perlimpimpim?' Monsieur Duvivier asks the children. They nod, and watch, as the left little finger works its wonders. Rural idealisation? Yes. Mystification? Yes. But whenever I feel low, and wish to put up a good face, I never take out my lipstick without grimacing to my mirror image: 'A little powder of perlimpimpim?'●

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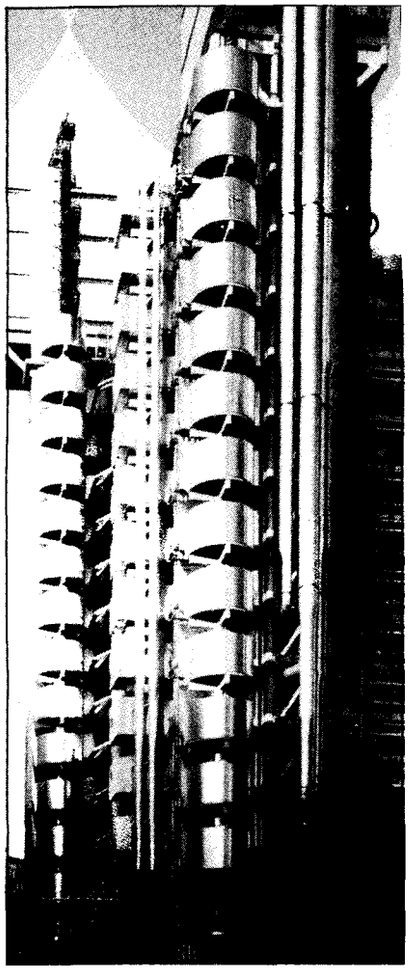
Tim Clarke on architectural visions of the information age

Machine Dreams



In the last few pages of his classic history of the modern movement in architecture, *Theory And Design In The First Machine Age*, Reyner Banham asks an important question: how profound was architects' understanding of the technology which was the supposed rationale for the modernist International Style?

The question was picked up in a book published last year by *The Guardian*'s controversial modernist archtitectural critic Martin Pawley, called *Theory And Design In The Second Machine Age*, clearly intended as a contribution to this country's rather parochial architectural debate. He argues that the so-called 'failure of modernism' has been a 'failure to pursue technology as it has evolved'; that 'we do not have a theory of architecture for the second machine age'.

In this he echoes Reyner Banham who was forced to conclude with the critical tautology that the great modernists 'produced a machine age architecture only in the sense that its monuments were built in a machine age'. Pawley argues that the supposed 'functionalism' of the modern movement collapsed into formalism and preoccupation with style, in contrast to the strong continuing technical innovations which were taking place in the motor industry at the time.

The desire to link architecture to other technologies, indeed industries other than the rather laggard building industry, has been a very important theme of a certain kind of architectural avant-gardism, which perhaps reaches its apogee in the high-tech aspirations of Sir Norman Foster and Richard Rogers.

Pawley's book is undoubtedly important in making links between architecture and society – particularly the question of production. If the architectural debate is sometimes parochial, it also often gives the impression of being rather formalistic, concerned more with style than content.

Pawley also links architecture in a very useful way with some of the sociological discussion about the direction of postindustrial society. But rather than linking the concept of the 'second machine age' to post-Fordist production (as would seem to be implied in its very name) Pawley defines it very narrowly in terms of the direct impact Information Technology has on buildings: 'Today no architecture – not even the revered architecture of the past – can exist without information... physical form is marginal' and the marginality of physical form partly explains the emergence of 'bizarre homogenised heritage architecture'. In other words by ignoring technological realities postmodernists are producing so much irrelevant packaging.

According to Pawley, Information Technology (IT) should define 'the building type for the 21st century' – here termed the 'New Gothic Solution'. This is a strange analogy indeed which begins with a comparison between the 'outrigged' skeletal construction of Gothic cathedrals and certain high-tech designs like the Lloyds building.

Pawley argues that, 'The Gothic cathedrals were public information buildings... their huge windows were picture screens designed to convey visual information to large numbers of people.' The church may have got the message across through visual media, but the comparison of stained glass and computer screens is a bit far-fetched.

Some architects are more circumspect. Francis Duffy heads DEGW, a practice that has specialised in offices and 'Intelligent Buildings'. He is the author of *The Changing City*, an important book on the architectural impact of the Big Bang in the City. Practitioners are slightly more cautious in their assessment of the impact of IT, partly because it is becoming easier to accommodate and does not necessarily require the high-tech Lloyds-style solutions that were implied at the beginning of the 80s. The evolution of the ubiquitous PC which sits on a desk at home or works within a more powerful 'network' in the office, the high-powered laptop and, indeed, 'notebook' computers have transformed the architectural implications of IT in a decade. It is important for architects and pundits to keep up with technology.

Duffy is interested in the 'indirect' sociological effects on architecture – 'the skyscraper was a great cultural victory, it was the product of the typewriter and the telephone' – and was made possible by the elevator.

Many critics have pointed out that the modernist 'corporation building' was the architectural manifestation of a certain phase of capitalism – the architecture of Fordism perhaps – the rationalisation of the division of labour, the symbol or even the embodiment of the corporate hierarchy. It was necessary to have buildings in the centre of cities, for workers to be commuters and attend nine to five, to write letters and answer the telephone.

Now that 'bosses' have laptops and 'workers' have to be computer literate, it is clear that technological innovation is producing cultural change in the workplace, leading to, in managerial jargon, 'flatter' hierarchies. It is not pushing the point to say that this does correlate in architecture with the emergence of flatter buildings – at least more 'low-rise' in business parks than high-rise in city centres.

And of course one of the major implications of the communications revolution of the second machine age is the oft-predicted increase in home-working done outside the office or traditional workplace. Duffy observes, 'time and the city were concentrated by Fordism. In the future the cultural artefact of the nine to five day will tend to disappear and this in turn will lead to a dissolving of the city itself. Time was functionally divided like the city, and changes in routines will lead to changes in spatial arrangements in cities.'

So where do the various wide ranging discussions about postindustrialism leave our parochial architectural debate? It was an axiom of the high modernism of the first machine age that you had to start from scratch to produce the functional city. But an architectural theory for the second machine age really needs to be concerned as much with the old as with the new – giving existing buildings new functions and new geographical constellations.

The problem is that a significant strand of modernist architectural ideology rests on a rather crude technological determinism. But it is important that the ambivalent architectural implications of 'second machine age' technology are not sloganised. Does a laptop, for instance, need any particular kind of shelter? The challenge in the second machine age is to work out a new meaning for the machine aesthetic.●

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Susan Watts asks whose life it is anyway

Patents Pending

When scientists invent something, whether a wristwatch telephone or a solar-powered bicycle, it is generally accepted that they will apply for a patent as a way of protecting their rights over the invention. But one of the youngest of technologies, genetic engineering, has prompted a fierce debate over the established principles of intellectual property. Should plants and animals with altered genes be considered 'inventions' and thus be patentable? In other words, should we patent life?

The question has already polarised opinions, yet most of the British public knows little about the true capabilities of the science involved. But over the next few months we should all be hearing a lot more about patents and life, since the European Parliament is about to consider a draft law that would allow patents on plants and animals with modified genes.

'Opponents fear the patenting of human beings. Human cells, cultured in the laboratory, have already been patented as tools for producing useful enzymes and drugs'

One engineered animal has already satisfied the patent authorities in the United States. In 1988, Harvard University granted a patent on the 'Oncomouse', a tailor-made mouse with extra 'oncogenes' that make it susceptible to cancer. The chemicals company Du Pont now has a licence to sell the mouse to anyone interested in cancer research.

The mouse patent has had a harder time in Europe than in the US, partly because of the broadness of Harvard's claims. The appeals board of the European Patent Office has told its examiners to consider whether the altered mouse offends public morality – a legal twist used in the past to prohibit patents on contraceptions. This has sounded alarm bells in patent offices everywhere – the board has brought into the debate all the thorny moral and ethical issues patent examiners would rather avoid.

At present, plants and animals are not patentable, since they are products of nature rather than inventions. But the new law classes engineered organisms as 'not essentially biological' – and therefore as patentable. The staggering advances of molecular biology and the development of reliable genetic engineering techniques since the mid-1970s have produced many animals and plants that would not exist if it were not for their 'inventors': the genetic engineers who extracted and manipulated the extra genes that make them special.

Many such 'products' now wait in the wings, ready to enter the marketplace. They include pigs with extra growth hormone genes that make them fatten faster; rabbits with genes altered so that they produce drugs in their milk, as living factories; tomatoes engineered to stay firm; and staple food crops equipped with genetic material that makes them store more protein, or renders them resistant to pests and viruses.

The proposed European legislation has motivated a broad coalition of interested parties to come together to oppose it. Patent Concern includes more than 30 animal welfare, religious, legal, farming and environmental organisations: groups such as Greenpeace, the Genetics Forum, the RSPCA and Christian Aid. They have expressed their anxieties in open letters to prime minister John Major, and president of the European Commission Jacques Delors.

The Patent Concern coalition believes that the planned law could have damaging social and economic consequences. They also believe that the possibility of monopoly ownership on living things raises ethical questions about people's relationship with the rest of nature. They argue that such concerns outweigh the need to encourage an emerging biotechnology industry, even if it does have the potential to bring substantial wealth to many of Europe's member states.

Religious opponents of the law argue that to claim to 'patent' life is a direct denial of God as creator and sustainer. Others are anxious about animal welfare issues, as a new industry develops and scientists push animals' bodies to their physiological limits. Pigs with extra growth hormone genes, and rabbits used as 'bio-reactors' to produce drugs in their milk, have been born infertile, with crippling disabilities and poor vision.

The Patent Concern coalition also say that to grant such patents could drastically increase the control of a few large companies over agriculture and genetic resources, particularly in developing countries. At the moment farmers can re-sow seed or breed from farm animals as they wish, and many communities depend on the genetic diversity of their native plants to develop new crops and drugs. But crops engineered by biotechnologists are often based on DNA taken from species found in the developing world. In the future, farmers could find themselves buying engineered seeds, built by biotechnology companies using DNA extracted from those same plants. They might have to pay hefty royalties to companies who hold patent rights over every seed from a genetically engineered crop and every piglet from an altered pig.

If control over the food supply were to slip into the hands of a few large biotechnology or chemical companies, then consumers would face the risk of higher prices and less choice, according to the new coalition. They argue that handing control of the world's genetic res-

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Illustration: Shane McGowan

ources to industry in this way would raise the chances of ecological problems, such as the threat of famine when highly specialised crops are wiped out by disease.

Patents would also hinder the free flow of scientific information, the coalition argues. Chemical companies which support university researchers might discourage them from publishing papers in the scientific journals, because this would amount to a disclosure and risk sacrificing the company's chance of gaining patents.

The biotechnology industry is sympathetic to some of these concerns, but maintains that the new technology requires substantial initial investment, despite the fact that it holds the promise of lucrative new markets. Investors may pull out if companies cannot assure them that they will be able to secure patents.

Many of the developments should prove beneficial to society as a whole, the industry argues, helping to protect the environment by reducing the need for pesticides and producing abundant supplies of more nutritious crops. Granting licences to farmers, breeders and researchers who want to use its patented plants and animals is the industry's preferred route for recouping some of its costs. They maintain that without royalties from licensees on new crops, farmers will find themselves paying higher prices to cover the cost of research.

They also say that patenting the work of researchers is the best way to ensure that information reaches the public domain, since a company cannot gain a patent without describing the work in sufficient detail to enable a practising genetic engineer to repeat the work.

Momentum in Europe for allowing patents on plants and animals is gathering force. The pressure is on in part because of a huge international scientific project to work out the sequence of the DNA that makes up a human: the Human Genome Project. Scientists will apply .for patents on the potentially useful stretches of human DNA they decipher, especially those with clinical applications such as the chance to develop pre-natal probes to detect genetic disorders.

But opponents of the proposed European law fear that this technological march will trip unchecked into the patenting of human beings, raising the spectre of fetuses with genetic material designed and owned by their parents. Human cells, cultured in the laboratory, have already been patented as tools for producing useful enzymes and drugs.

Last summer John Moore, a sufferer from hairy-cell leukaemia, was found to have unusual cells in his spleen, capable of producing a protein that could help scientists better understand cancer. The University of California has patented Moore's cells, and two companies, Genetics Institute in Massachusetts, and Sandoz Pharmaceutical in New Jersey, intend to develop drugs from the cells. Moore appealed for a share in the profits from his spleen, but was turned down by the State Supreme Court of California. Researchers and the biotechnology industry breathed a sigh of relief: they will depend increasingly on cells such as Moore's in developing future drugs.

Both the US and European patent offices have said they do not intend the industry to allow patents on human beings. But lawyers working on the new legislation have yet to agree on wording that will outline the delicate distinction between human cells and human beings. This delay has increased the opposition's anxiety at a time when research in areas such as gene therapy is progressing apace, holding up a real chance for parents to rid their offspring of genetic defects.

The legal battle over the proposed European law will centre on the interpretation of the word 'variety'. Plants and animals that fall into the 'varieties' clause of the European Patent Convention are not patentable. But if a 'variety' is defined only as a plant or animal produced by traditional breeding practices, genetically engineered plants and animals will be excluded – and will therefore be patentable.

The time has come for the debate to broaden out beyond the legal niceties of patent law. What people must decide, and let their MPs know, is whether an inventor should be denied a patent on a plant or animal that results from much painstaking research simply because the product is alive. Is there anything instrinsically different about life that should stop us exploiting it?●

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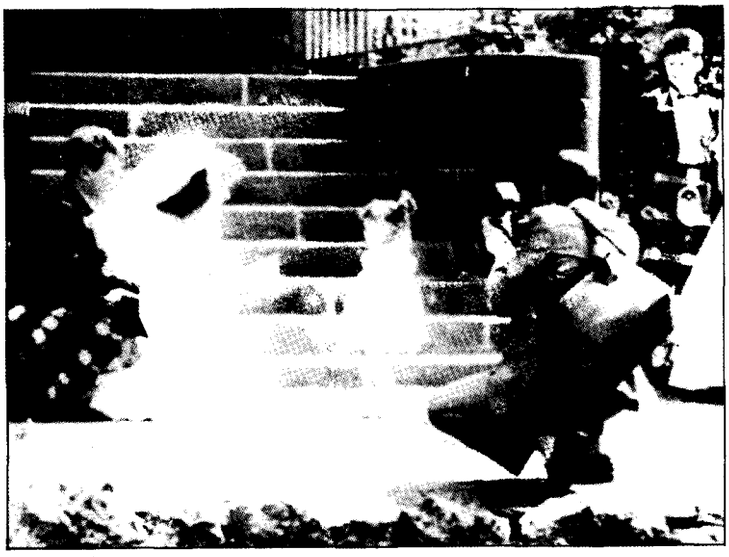
Angela McRobbie on talk of marriage north of the border

The Great Day



There is a passage in Simon Charsley's study of marriage in Scotland, **Rites Of Marrying** (*Manchester University Press, hbk £29.95*) which could have been lifted from a James Kelman novel. The man in question is about to go through with a 'mixed marriage', where a Catholic marries a non-Catholic in a church wedding.

The non-believer has to go through a course of instruction before the wedding, and in this case the young man is explaining how priests tend to be more sympathetic with this kind of situation than ministers in the Church of Scotland: 'I went in one Sunday after mass to see him. He'd hardly ever met me but he knew my name, because he'd,... they have their own wee beats. They patrol certain parts of the parish. And – well, not patrol but they go and visit the houses now and again... And he asked me about Jan, and said "Is she a catholic?" And I said "no", and I thought here we go! Crunch! But he just matter-of-fact looked at... , took all the details, said "That'll be no problem".'

Rites Of Marrying is an ethnographic account of the various stages preceding what is often referred to as the great day. It is a modest study which consistently emphasises the importance of creating a record of what is for most people one of the most memorable events in their lives. Charsley avoids taking on the larger issues of class or sexual politics, or indeed sex itself, giving the work a more traditional anthropological flavour. Since sociologists and cultural theorists have recently, and sadly, relinquished the study of everyday life in favour of textual analysis of almost any old film or tv programme, Charsley makes a convincing case for bringing anthropology into 'contemporary metropolitan settings'.

Anthropology at home in this case means documenting, with the help of a number of key respondents, the processes leading up to the marriage. This includes a short digression into the industries which rely on weddings and the extent to which costs escalate and typically are covered by the parents. Charsley shows how the decision to marry puts into practice a process of initiation into adult family culture where family ties are both consolidated and extended as a result of the new partnership.

What makes the book such an enjoyable read are the contributions by the respondents themselves as they ponder the questions put to them. Asked to explain the significance of the show of presents Jean answers, "'Oh, my! Isn't that lovely! Look at that, Oh, beautiful, beautiful." That's the usual. "Oh she's done well" – that was the ubiquitous expression that was there all the time... "

Charsley also captures the pleasure in feeling safe and settled which he argues is the main function of getting engaged. The young woman can feel able to trust her fiancee knowing that he has committed himself to her, while she herself, by wearing an engagement ring, will be able to stop the unwelcome attention of other men.

If this sounds many miles away from the reality of modern living-together arrangements and contemporary feminism, then the point Charsley is trying to make is that such values exist alongside and are even complementary with the 'live-in lovers' image which we have become so familiar with.

Nonetheless there is perhaps a stronger class dimension which could have been more rigorously pursued. Charsley prefers to see these pre-marriage rituals as Scottish and as embracing all social classes. This stops him from exploring the dynamics of difference between the middle-class and the working-class wedding. This is a pity because the most moving and perhaps most telling moments in the study are those which focus on the economics of marriage on the dole: 'I'm getting my buroo money – you know you get it every fortnight. And my sister's man, he's getting drink out of the cash and carry for the show of presents – £15 I'm giving him for drink. I think it's really terrible now. You used to go and you'd get a drink and a cup of tea... but now they think they're coming for eight good drinks.'

Most of all this study produced in me, as somebody who, despite having got married myself in the Glasgow registry office, nonetheless has attended many Scottish church weddings, a sharp sense of loss and change. The loss is that of festivity and sentiment, the change is that of culture, city, place.●

Natasha Moar on the storytellers

Little Angels

When **The Lagoon And Other Stories** (*Bloomsbury, hbk £9.95*) was first published in 1951, its author, Janet Frame, was a mental patient, diagnosed wrongly as schizophrenic. As the film *An Angel At My Table*, by fellow New Zealander Jane Campion, revealed, Frame's collection not only won her a prestigious literary prize; but in doing so it dissuaded her doctors from going ahead with a frontal leucotomy.

It is apt that writing should have, in effect, saved Frame's life, when life and fantasy constantly overtake each other in this enchanting and moving collection. The little girls that feature so strongly in these stories, drawn, one suspects, directly from Frame's childhood, are caught up in wishful fantasies of how they would dearly like to be. The watchful and witty eye of the author sustains a child's view of selfhood, school and family life, more readily than that of an adult. On the one hand their imaginative play; on the other their recognition and frequent rejection of the adult world.

Frame: A charmed benevolence

Two stories about the death of sisters (Frame herself lost

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two sisters) typically show childish hope and optimism in conflict with loss and grief. In 'The Secret', Nini shares an absorbing make-believe world with her beloved sister Myrtle. When Mum tells Nini that the doctor told her Myrtle would die, she refuses to admit the logic of a child dying and we are almost taken in by her happy assurances that nothing will change.

'Keel And Kool' traces a little girl's realisation of the terrible loneliness created by her sister Eva's death. She is playing with her dead sister's best friend when the desolate cry of seagulls cannot but bring her loss home to her.

Frame's short stories are rich and satisfying because their conclusions create a flowering, rather than a closure. Change is evident in the slightest shift of emphasis; detail that is at once subtle and crystal clear. Most of the stories are cast as prose poetry, a lyrical stream of consciousness tempered by the charmed benevolence of Frame's outlook. Her more 'sanely' written accounts of the sadness of mental home life are written with terrifying lucidity, the world that could easily have destroyed Frame seeming not frightening but small and sad.

Where Frame leads us gently to her tales' end, Fay Weldon, in her latest collection of short stories **Moon Over Minneapolis, Or Why She Couldn't Stay** (*Harper Collins, hbk* £12.99) forces us to accept unconvincing changes of mind and character. Her writing rests uneasily between two stools. It accommodates the conventions of women's magazine fiction, yet contains a streak of liberalism which characterises her misleadingly as a woman's – even feminist – writer.

Weldon's stories are heavy-handed and written to formula. Businesswoman Oriole Green attends a private abortion clinic and has her mind changed at the last minute by a pro-life receptionist. A smile from a Yugoslavian waiter is sufficient to make a young woman realise that her professor lover is too pompous and too old for her, and to leave him immediately. These stories can be read as glibly as they are written, and perhaps with some enjoyment, but little feeling.●

Don Roamin'

Don Juan is alive and well and living in Greenwich Village. As a lesbian. And her story is exactly what you would expect, if you looked at it with lacerating honesty rather than through the rosy glow of pink triangular spectacles. There are male confessional books written now by ex-Casanovas about their 'Don Juan complex', which present it as an obsessive, unhappy and unpleasurable addiction. From what would seem at first glance to be a very different point of view, Jane DeLynn's novel, **Don Juan In The Village** (*Serpent's Tail, pbk* £7.99), reaches an identical conclusion.

Thus, its heroine has sex not because of overpowering desire, but as a kind of duty. Constantly in motion – from Morocco to Ibiza, from Padua to Iowa, the list of stopping-points on her journey is, perhaps deliberately, interminable – her sexual encounters, despite the varied cultures of her surroundings, are curiously similar, if not often identical. The women she sleeps with are treated as status symbols; one, picked up in a bar, is made to walk a few paces in her wake, being considered too ugly to be seen next to her on the street. She keeps her eyes closed during sex with another because she doesn't want to acknowledge that she's having sex with a fat woman. Others are not even allowed names.

Forever in quest of the perfect thin, 'slightly trashy' blonde, this Don Juanita never experiences a moment of real pleasure, being trapped and held fast by her own narcissism. Besides, it's harder for the Don as a woman. Italian whores won't sleep with you, Puerto Rican teenagers won't even dance with you, men in cars force you to masturbate them as the price of a lift. She is fully aware that behaving like a man doesn't automatically give her a man's power, but even her sharp self-knowledge won't allow her to alter her behaviour to compensate.

Don Juan In The Village deals, ultimately, with the way sex works when it is forcibly detached from emotion, and the sadness of the womaniser eternally hovering in limbo between the two, hardly able to experience either one. In the way that fiction works best, the specificity of its story has a universal message; as uneasy, uncomfortable and sordid as bad sex itself.●

Lauren Milne Henderson

Mystery Plays

Anyone who reads Juan Goytisolo's latest work, **The Virtues Of The Solitary Bird** (*Serpent's Tail, pbk* £8.99) and finds themselves in the dark, should not be deterred. For Goytisolo is comitted to obscurity. The hallucinatory monologue flickers theatrically across eras and cultures – religiose sensuality, imperial pomp, baroque elaboration – but the scene shifts are barely visible. His prose, now arid, now cloying, gathers like a cloud of incense; a heady concoction of Spanish intensity; with the fumes of Velasquez, Goya, and Dali.

The author is witness to a strange calamity – a vision of an allegorical sower of discord, who annihilates victims, rendering their bodies to a pulp. From a hospital bed, where the atmosphere slips between the ennui of a seaside convalescence and the paranoia of supervision, the author attempts to preserve what he has seen. His impulse is to narrate the liberties lost in the destruction; but the disaster he struggles with in his memory is also the process of control – of accountability – that such narration involves. The story itself creates the conditions of mental control which the author seeks to escape.

Rebellion against any and every natural form of control and authority is the order of the day. The title is an allusion to St John, forced by the Inquisition to swallow his 'Treatise On The Qualities Of The Solitary Bird'. The writer must protect the vision he unfolds, so the narrative takes shape through hints and half-recollections. Sequence is interrupted, lies mixed with truth, the flow of the tale bearing an occult relation to the ordering of text on the page – blank spaces or chapter breaks seeming to cut arbitrarily across the narrative.

One fragment challenges, 'Was it possible to decipher the obscurities of the text, find a universal explanatory key... circumscribe its linguistic ambiguities... '. The difficulties of the text are radical. However the transgressions of convention are not merely iconoclastic, or a strategy of seduction, as with Jean Genet. Instead, obscurity becomes the book's raison d'être – 'wouldn't it be better to plunge once and for all into the infinitude of the poem, accept the impenetrability of its mysteries and opacities, free your own language from the shackles of rationality... '. Like St John finding his true love in the dark night of the soul, Goytisolo searches for political and psychological redemption in mystery.●

Kieran Gallagher

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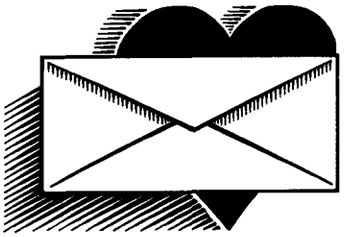

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NORMAN MELBURN

In gratitude for all his help and support over many years. Our condolences to his family on their sad loss.

The Editor, Editorial Board and staff of Marxism Today.

MT BOOKS

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● **Hammersmith Books.** World-famous mail-order service since 1948. One hundred thousand OP titles. 081-876 7254 (24 hours). High Street, SW13 9LR.

● **Key Books Birmingham.** Marxism, Feminism, Black studies, Environment, Dual Language children's books. Magazines and cards. 136 Digbeth, B5 6DR. 021-643 8081.

● **Passport to world band radio** shows how easy it is to tune into Radio Stations worldwide, such as Radio Moscow, Voice of America, Radio Australia, etc., to receive the latest news, current affairs, entertainment, or music in English or foreign language. Price £12.95 plus £1.50 p&p.
Interbooks, MX1, 8 Abbot Street, Perth, PH2 OEB. Tel: 0738-30707.

● **Anarchist Yearbook.** Send £1.50 to Phoenix Press, PO Box 824, London, N1 9DL, for 32 page pamphlet.

● **Desperately Seeking Big Flames** "Past Against Our Future: Fighting Racism and Fascism" – David Greason, Box 47528, Morrison Hill. Hong Kong.

● **Wanted: Books/Pamphlets on Socialism and Marxism.** New catalogue now out, send SAE to Porcupine Books 16 St Pauls Court, London N19 4LB.

● **CRITICAL THEORY:** First comprehensive catalogue of contemporary critical theory and cultural politics. SAE for free copy. Publichouse Bookshop, 21 Little Preston Street, BRIGHTON BN1 2HQ. Tel: 0273-28357.

EVENTS

● **Benefit for the Kurds,** Saturday 22nd June Caxton House Community Centre, London — Middle Eastern Food, Music, Cabaret, Speakers, organised by Communist Party in Transformation — phone Miriam Rivett 071-278 4443.

CHILDREN & SCHOOLING

● **Dissatisfied? Educating children at home?** Parents looking for alternatives, contacts, ideas in North London. We are: Jonathan Rutherford 071-272 4756

CAMPAIGNS

● **Campaign for tactical voting in Hornsey** Common Voice Public Meeting, Monday 3 June 7.45pm Hornsey Library, Haringey Park N8. Details 081-801 9490.

Nicaragua Coffee Brigades

Defend the gains of the Sandinista Revolution by picking coffee on a Nicaraguan Co-operative for one month in December/January. Details from
Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign
Red Rose Club
129 Seven Sisters Road
London N7 7QG
071 272 9619

MT EVENTS

● **WOMEN AND 1992** Jane Pillinger, author of *Women and 1992*. Open discussion. All women welcome. 11-1pm, Saturday 8 June, TUC Club, Saville Mount, Leeds 7. Creche on request. CP Women's Network, 0532-626343.

● **Body Politic Erotic Self:** A one-day event, sponsored by Marxism Today, on sexual politics. Saturday 13 July at the Jacksons Lane Centre, 269 Archway Rd, London N6. Sessions include censorship, heterosexuality, sexual identity, masculine consumerism and much more. Details from BPES, 28 Wargrave Ave, London N15 6UD.

● **Power To The Public:** Roundtable on the public sector with Sarah Benton of Marxism Today; Andy Green, author of *Education and State Formation*; Pete Morris, Head of Research at NUPE; Rita O'Brien, health-worker. Tuesday 25 June, 7.45pm at Hornsey Library, Haringey Park, London N8. Organised by Haringey MT Group, details: 081-809 5068.

● **Hackney Marxism Today Group:** Newly formed, will be launched in the Autumn with a seminar series on globalisation and localisation. If you're a Hackney and Stoke Newington MT reader get in touch with me: Sarah Cassidy, 1b Kenmure Rd, London E8 1JU. Tel: 081-533 6327.

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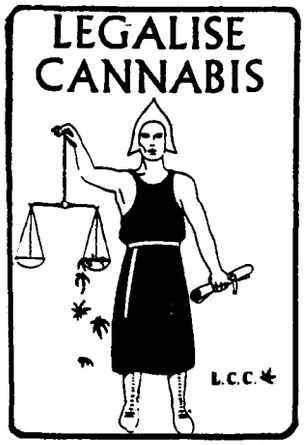

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Promotions: Helen Bailey, Becky Canning, Peter Chapman, Johnny Mundane, Joanna Sumner.

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Frances Barber

Frances Barber is one of Britain's leading stage and screen actresses. Probably best known for her portrayal of Rosie in Stephen Frears and Hanif Kureishi's film *Sammy And Rosie Get Laid*, she has played major roles for the RSC, the Royal Court and the Renaissance Theatre Company. She has just completed a major Screen One film for BBC1, *Hancock*, in which she and Alfred Molina play Freddie and Tony Hancock, and she co-stars with Alan Bates this autumn in *Secret Friends*, a play for Channel Four written and directed by Dennis Potter.

What newspapers do you take? *The Guardian*, The *Mirror*, *The Observer*, *The Independent On Sunday* and *Hello*.

What animal best resembles you? A dormouse: I can sleep more than anyone I know.

What is your favourite piece of architecture? The pyramid in front of the Louvre.

What was your first thought this morning? I'd rather die than go to the gym.

Do you have a recurring dream? No.

What would you most like to alter about your appearance? On bad days most things, on good days not much.

What talent would you most like to have? To play the piano.

Are you superstitious? Very.

What do you blame your parents for? Nothing.

What is your favourite joke? Two cows in a field. First cow: 'I'm really worried about mad cow disease.' Second cow: 'I'm not bothered, I'm a sheep.'

Who do you most respect? My mum; she's the most courageous woman I know.

Which thinker has had most effect on your own personal philosophy? Jung and my mum.

You're driving through a hot, desolate expanse. What's playing on the stereo? Radio Four.

Who would you most want to change places with? Anthony Burgess for a day, to increase my vocabulary.

Do you believe Page 3 should be banned? Yes.

Which games do you enjoy playing? Quizzes: they confirm how little I do know.

Which charities do you give money to? Terrence Higgins Trust and Cancer Research.

Do you pay your poll tax? Yes.

Which politician do you find the least unattractive? Ken Livingstone.

Under what circumstances would you use private medicine? When the NHS no longer exists.

Should South Africa be allowed to compete in the '92 Olympics? If Oliver Tambo says so.

What films do you love and hate the most? Favourites: *Jules Et Jim* and *Bad Timing*. I really loathed Werner Herzog's *Heart Of Glass*.

What is your favourite meeting place? My dressing room after a show, but only if I'm in a hit.

What tv do you watch to relax? *Carry On* films and *Prisoner Cell Block H*.

Do you use public transport on a regular basis? If I did I'd become a London Transport official serial killer.

Are your political allegiances the same as they were when you were 18? Pretty much so.

What would you die for? A cigarette: I've just given up. Again.

What are your addictions? Feeling guilty.

Do you own shares? No.

If you couldn't do your current job, what would you do? Fuck knows.

What part of this life would you take into another life? The same friends.

What do you now own that you had never dreamt of owning? A dog.

What is the most amount of money you've spent on an item of clothing? Don't ask.

Which film star do you dream about? Richard Gere.

Which is your favourite city? Paris: everyone smokes and drinks, every car has a dent in it, around every corner is some heart-stopping architecture, and the metro works properly.

Are you a thinker or a doer? I think a lot about what I should be doing.

What is the worst job in the world? Working in a Chuckie Chicken factory. (I've done it.)

Complete this sentence: If I were dictator for a day... I'd sack everyone in charge of London Transport, force them to travel with me during rush hour and see how many escalators don't work.

What do you no longer believe in? Come-uppance.

What hi-tech device scares you? A nuclear warhead.

How do you want to have changed by the end of the millennium? I want to have become a mother.

How much more do you want to achieve? To sleep with Richard Gere.●

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